

Overland Kit Rivalled! The Great Story, "Silver Sam," commenced this week!

NEW YORK DEADWOOD

A HOME WEEKLY

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No. 362

JACK'S MOTHER'S STORY.

Fire and Cold and Storm and Water.

BY MARCO O. ROLFE.

My boy left me yester mornin',
Full of hope and full of life,
Goin' to a distant city,
To bring home a glad young wife.
I remember he was smilin'
As the train rushed past the door,
But no warnin' spirit told me
I should never see him more.

The good Lord has so provided—
With a wisdom strange to men—
That the veil that's ever hangin',
The *Nou* hiding from the *Inu*,
Can't be pierced by mortal vision;
An' we find it hard to believe
That the joy we feel at sunrise
Will be changed to woe at eve.

All day long I fondly pondered
On the happiness to come—
For I thought that Jack and Mary,
Both, I soon should welcome home;
An' I knew we'd be as happy
As any three a-livin'!

An' I raised, ev'ry hour or two,
A prayer of glad thanksgivin'.
I began to make things tidy,
An' a-puttin' 'em in shape—
Not a web, from roof to cellar,
Did my vigilance escape.
An' I filled the parlor furniture,
An' I waxed the kitchen floor,
An' I twined a sprig of evergreen
Nicely o'er the parlor door.

I made up my mind that Mary
Should discover Jack had known
What it was to live in comfort,
When I did the work alone;
But, above all other feelin's,
Was the thought that my son's wife
Should receive a welcome from me
That should gladden her new life.

After I'd put all in order,
An' I had looked through ev'ry room,
Givin' here and there some touches
With the duster or the broom,
I was standin' an' admirin'
The fine fixin's on the stand,
When a boy came in a-runnin',
With a message in his hand.

I tore the envelope open,
While my fingers jerked an' shook,
An' on that flutterin' paper
I cast one waverin' look.
The bridge is down at Ashtabula,
Was the message that I read;
And, among a hundred others,
Your son Jack is lyin' dead!"

Fire and cold and storm and water,
Water, storm and cold and fire,
All became Death's eager servants,
All together did conspire
To ingulf our land in sadness,
And to fill our hearts with woe—
A hundred souls went up to heav'n
Through the thickly-fallin' snow!

I am strivin' not to murmur,
An' I pray to God for grace
To endure my trial bravely;
An' I seem to see Jack's face
Lookin' at me through the water,
Spakin' 'blest's on my head,
An' implorin' me to comfort
His widow who ne'er was wed.

Silver Sam;

The Mystery of Deadwood City.

BY COLONEL DELLE SARA.

CHAPTER I.

THE LONELY GRAVE ON THE PRAIRIE.

"The crow makes wing to the rocky wood,"
Northward goes the trail from Laramie's Fort;
Straight as the arrow flies, almost, the adventuring
gold-seekers have cut a way through the trackless
wilderness direct to the Black Hills, the new Eldorado
of the West. First the horse and hunter, then the
ground of the painted, feather-bedizened savage,
great Nature's natural son.

What recked it of the desperate men, turning
their backs upon the comforts of civilization, and
seeking to win new fortune in an untamed land,
that the fierce red barbarians had sharpened afresh
the scalping-knife, dug new pigments from mother
earth's bosom to adorn their visages with the hideous
tints of war, and had determined to dispute
every inch of soil and bar the advance of the gold-
seekers with new-made graves?

The same lust that lured the world-seeking
Genoese across the stormy seas—that carried bold Cortez
and desperate Pizarro in frail shalups to an
unknown shore, hurried them on.

The chink of gold has ever been the sweetest
music to mortal ears since the world began. And a
golden dream it was that led the pushing, daring
crowd on, clear into the Black Hills, despite the
Sioux savages, despite the soldiers of the United
States government, despite the phantoms, hunger
and thirst, who marched with them by day and
crouched by their camp-fires at night.

On through the pathless wilderness the gold-mad-
dened throng had marched—strong men and weak
—the veteran gold-seekers—the spruce clerk from
the city counters—the hard-headed farmer's son,
fresh from the plow—the sturdy mechanic—all
lured from their homes by the wondrous stories
told of rich golden deposits in the Black Hills, pa-
tiently waiting for pick and shovel—the advent of
the conquering white man, to make wealthy forever
the lucky mortals who should stumble upon the
hiding place of the treasures.

'Tis the fabulous region of the unknown that at-
tracts.

The past we know—alas! sometimes too well! the
present we can guess at, but of the future we
dream, and to the dream, bright hope—heaven's
best gift to short-sighted mortals—ever lends a
golden tinge.

And on the track of the golden dreamers—who
but followed the subtle instinct, strong in the breast
of men since the early ages, which has ever bade
the adventuring spirit journey to the West, the land
of the setting sun—came the tribe whose "totems"
are the wolf and the vulture, whose chosen weapon
is John Barleycorn's distilled juice.

Hard on the heels of the honest sons of toil came
the outcasts of civilization.

The men upon whose shoulders an outraged law
had laid its iron gripe, who traded with the savage
because their own race had driven them forth.
Who speaks of the days of '49 in the Californian
land, as of an episode that has passed away never
to return?

Mankind is still the same, whether on the far
Pacific slope, amid the bleak hills of White Pine,



Fast over the Prairie raced the Pursued and Pursuers, the strange horseman turned in his saddle and laughed in defiance.

the rocky ravines of the Apache land by the Rio
Gila, or in the northern Black Hills, where the Big
Horn mountains cut the sky and frown down upon
pleasant valleys.

And of this strange multitude—good men and
bad strong men and weak, the honest toiler, the
wily "sharp," the bum—ever in the advance of
civilization, as was his namesake in advance of
Shannon's legions when the federal chief marched
through Georgia's fair land, from where Atlanta's
ruins smoked to a gloomy sky, sad to witness
war's desolation, to Savannah's sun smiling upon
the fairest city in all our own dear Southern land—
we shall write—shall tell a tale so strange that
foreign eyes shall marvel as they read, and wonder
what magic there is in this Western strand that
from its soil have sprung a race of men who, all
unhindered and unsung, have performed deeds of
valor that can put to shame the Grecian heroes,
whose exploits live forever in immortal verse.

Easy is it now to follow the trail leading from the
iron way of the Union Pacific road to the Black
Hill metropolis Deadwood City, the "magic" town
that, like Aladdin's palace, seemed to grow in a
single night.

The way is marked by civilization's signs.
The mangled remains of broken wagons, empty
tins, bearing the legends, "Delaware tomatoes,"
"fresh peaches," etc., smashed whisky bottles, with
here and there the white bones of some animal
unable to withstand the fatigue of the march.
Nor was there wanting sign of gentle woman's
presence, for here and there strange devices of
wire and tape, firmly bound together, bird-cage
fashion, affrighted the wandering great white wolf
or his more sneaky brother, the snarling coyote.

It was night, and the moon shone bright as day.
Over the barren plain toward the north a horse-
man was riding.

A man of powerful build, mounted upon a stout
Indian pony. Over his shoulder was cast the blanket
of the Indian, and as the rapid motion displaced its
folds it revealed the hunting-shirt and leggings com-
mon to the red-men.

A broad-brimmed felt hat was pulled down over
his brows, and from under it escaped long black
locks, coarse and straight.

A frontier scout, a mile off, would have had no
hesitation, from these signs, in pronouncing the
rider to be an Indian, and if he had examined more
closely he would have "guessed," from the fashion
of his moccasins and the manner in which his leg-
gings were cut and trimmed, that he was a chief of
the Sioux nation, and no common warrior either, or
the gray wolf-tails would not have dangled at his
heels, a mark of distinction that only a chief of note
can wear.

The hour of midnight was close at hand, and both
horse and rider seemed weary.

The pony flagged in his springy "lope," and the
rider sat less straight in the saddle.

A short distance ahead on the prairie a collection
of tin cans, scattered embers and other evidences
of civilization, promiscuously distributed about a
small clump of cottonwood trees, told that the
shelter of the timber had been sought by emigrants,
Black Hill-ward bound.

The horseman rode straight for the prairie island,
for so these scattered clumps of timber are gener-
ally termed by the frontiersmen.

Arriving under the trees he dismounted from the
pony, picked him to one of the trunks by a lariat,
and then took a circle about the little clump of tim-
ber, apparently to note the surroundings—a com-
mon precaution when one used to the wild life of the
frontier, where a new-comer is as often apt to prove
a foe as a friend.

Afar off as the eye could reach the plain extended
in an almost unbroken line, except at the north,
where the shadowy peaks of the Big Horn Moun-
tains cut the sky.

The horseman made a half-circle of the timber
and then suddenly stopped; a little mound of earth
some ten paces off, surmounted by a rude head-
board, attracted his attention.

It was evidently a grave.
Some weak traveler had fallen by the way and to
the rich virgin soil of the prairie the mortal remains

had been committed, and in order to mark the spot
some careful hand had placed the rude head-board.

And rude enough it was, indeed.
Just the lid of a cracker-box; one end sharpened
and pushed down into the soil, and upon the other
a rude inscription was cut.

JULIET OAKS.

AGED 30 Y'rs.

Hardly had the stranger read the inscription
when a good, round Anglo-Saxon oath came from
his lips, and in tremendous agitation he knelt by the
side of the grave.

"Juliet dead!" he cried, speaking as no red chief
ever spoke yet; "my search then for her is ended,
but my child—my little one—where is she? and
where, too, is the author of all this terrible misery?
The grave hides her from my bitter words, death
cancels the account, but my child—is she in the
Black Hills with him, the man whose face even I do
not know? but I'll hunt him down if it takes to my
dying day!"

And the big round moon witnessed the oath.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAGIC CITY.

"This castle has a pleasant seat."
A lively place, indeed, is Deadwood City—no
town in all the Black Hills to compare with it—
the "Magic city," as some of its inhabitants are
fond of terming it. More lively by night than by
day, though; for then the miners flock in from
the mountain gulches, and the one street of the town
assumes a festive appearance.

Plenty of saloons are there, and a theater, too,
and a concert-saloon, so the hard-handed miners do
not lack for amusement.

Right in the center of the town is an object,
which truly is one of the wonders of the city.
No need for the citizen to call the attention of a
stranger to it, for every new-comer to Deadwood
City speedily discovers it for himself, and for a few
moments poses in open-mouthed wonder before it.
And yet it was only a simple sign affixed to the
front of a small store—a one-story shanty, pretty
near the center of the town.

The sign read:

MERCEDES KIRKLEY,

CIGARS, TOBACCO, AND FANCY GOODS.

The only store in the young metropolis of the
Black Hills kept by a woman.

Therefore was it a wonder.

Women were not over-plentiful in Deadwood, and,
what few there were, the most of them were either
old and weather-beaten, or else scandal attached it-
self to their reputation.

But Mercedes, the keeper of the little shop, was
both young and pretty, fresh as a daisy, and as
lady-like as any city belle or fashion's queen.

Four short months before the time of which we
write the girl had arrived in Deadwood, alone and
unprotected. She had taken up her quarters at the
hotel, had occasioned much speculation, which did
not abate when she engaged a carpenter, had the
shanty store erected, and one morning quietly com-
menced business.

Trade thrived with her, for all the town flocked
with eager curiosity to behold the daring woman.

The town was disappointed, for Mercedes was not
at all the sort of girl that Deadwood expected to
see.

A bold, forward creature, full of talk and "go," a
bustling advocate of woman's rights, Deadwood had
thought to behold in Mercedes, and Deadwood was
woefully disappointed.

The girl was modest and retiring; waited upon her
customers with a shy smile, and bore herself in
such a manner that even the roughest customer,
from the gulches of the Big Horn, thought twice be-
fore venturing to bandy words or coarse jests with
her.

She was a lady, and the worst rough in the town
instinctively was awed into respect.

Pretty as a picture, too, was the girl, with a face
as fresh and fair as a bright summer's morning;
great gray-blue eyes, tender and true; a fine per-

fect oval in shape, clear red and white in color, and
as frank and honest in its look as ever a girl's face
has dared to be since the Creation day. Light and
graceful in form, always neatly attired, and with a
pleasant smile ever on her features, it was little
wonder that all the town swore that she hadn't an
equal west of the Missouri.

It was but natural, under the circumstances, that
the pretty shop-keeper should have plenty of suit-
ors.

As General Baltimore Bowie, the great oracle of
the town, was wont to remark, in his moments of
confidence:

"Be gad, sir, she's a devilish fine girl, me boy!"
And what the funny old Maryland lawyer didn't
know about women wasn't worth knowing.

But, one and all sighed in vain; the laughing girl
evaded all attempts at love-making; and if the ardent
swain became too persistent in his endeavors
to win her favor, she would quietly call the almon-
der Chinese, who assisted her in taking care of the
store, to attend to the customer, and withdraw into
the inner apartment, into whose sacred precincts
no suitor yet had been either bold or lucky enough
to penetrate.

In the Big Horn saloon the sharps had picked him
up for a greenhorn one night, and, for the first time
accepting the banter, he had flared the crowd.

No name too bad for William Jones—quiet Mont-
ana—the next morning, among all that gang of sharps.

Gambler, black-leg, and thief!"
But it was a bold man, after that night's work,
who dared Montana to try his luck at poker.

And, last on the list, comes Thomas Black, the
"Deuce," who was generally termed—the principal
store-keeper of the town.

CHAPTER III.

MERCEDES.

"The rich East holds not her peer."
In Mercedes' store, leaning on the counter, stood
Major Germaine, who had just purchased a cigar
and was about lighting it. Behind the counter stood
the girl herself with her bright, pleasant face, al-
ways so cheerful in its smile.

The major lit his cigar, threw away the match,
and then his attention was attracted by a tiny bou-
quet of wild flowers placed in a glass on the little
show-case.

"Fond of flowers, Miss Mercedes?" he asked,
stooping over and inhaling the odor of the blossoms.

"Oh, yes, very fond of flowers," she answered,
her clear voice as cheery and as pleasant as her face.

"Do you know, Miss Mercedes, that I have not-
iced that up in that west gulch the flowers seem to
grow purer and sweeter than anywhere else around
the town?"

It was a careless speech, and the major was tap-
ping his leg listlessly, with the light switch he car-
ried as he spoke.

A quick, sharp glance the girl cast at his face; evi-
dently her suspicions were aroused.

"Yes," she said.

"Yes," he replied; "haven't you noticed the
fact?"

"Well, no, I can't say that I have."
"And yet you walk up that way very often."

"How do you know I do?" was Miss Mercedes' natural question.

"Oh, a little bird told me," the soldier replied,
laughing.

"A very sharp little bird!" The girl was evi-
dently annoyed.

"I am well served, you see."
"How served?"

"Why, my little bird tells me where you go."
"There is no need of a bird to find that out; I
would have told you if you had asked me."

"Oh, yes, no doubt!"
"You do not believe me?"

"You wrong me," and the major bowed, gallantly.
"I do not see any reason why I should wish to
keep such a simple matter a secret."

"Sometimes times light as air betray us into
deepest consequences," replied the major, quoting
from memory, and quoting wrong as men gener-
ally do.

"I don't understand you at all," the girl said,

with a shake of her shapely head, so superbly crowned with its heavy coils of golden-brown hair. "None so bold as those who won't see, Miss Mercedes. The west gulch is a beautiful and most romantic place, and the one particular charm of the scene is the spot where, Messrs. Elijah Hallows and William Jones delve in the earth, seeking golden grains."

"Oh, and I suppose that your little bird told you that I sat down upon a rock and watched them work yesterday for over an hour?" Mercedes said sarcastically.

"Exactly one hour and a half by the watch," the girl asked, with a demure smile.

"Yes, Oh! he's a very smart little bird, I tell you! By the way, that charming taste this fellow, Montana, has in arranging flowers. This little spray of green in the midst of those scarlet what-you-call 'em, is quite superb," and the soldier bent over the humble blossoms in pretended admiration, but all the while he kept a close watch upon the face of the girl.

The speech did not produce the result anticipated, for the face of the girl did not change in the least. "I suppose you mean to imply that Mr. Jones-Montana, as you call him—arranged that little bunch of flowers?" she said, quietly.

"Yes, that is about it."

"Well, I'm sure that I can't say whether he did or not."

"With truth?"

"The girl drew her slender figure up proudly and looked the soldier full in the eye.

"Major, if you begin to talk in that way I'll send Ah Hi to wait on you."

"Ah! He was the Chinese whom we have spoken of as acting as man-of-all-work to the pretty shopkeeper."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Mercedes, but hang it all! make some allowance for a fellow!" the major exclaimed, bluntly. "To drop the bird fiction, I saw Montana—Miss William Jones, to give him the handle he claims here, although the records of some Eastern court undoubtedly give him another; well, I saw him gather the flowers and place them on the rock—I was on the hillside with my gun after game; then I saw you come along, take the flowers and fasten them on your bosom, a place of honor that my costly roses occupied all the way from the East expressly for you, never occupied. Then you went up the gulch to work and his companions were at work; you sat on a rock and for over an hour you talked to them."

"And you watched me from the hillside, horribly jealous, eh?" questioned Mercedes, laughing.

"Yes, that is the truth, and confoundedly astonished too. Why, do you know who and what this Montana is?"

"A very handsome young man," the girl replied, slyly, and with a half laugh.

"Well, that is all a matter of opinion! the major exclaimed with a grimace, which clearly indicated that he was not impressed with Mr. Montana's good looks. "To me he looks like a dead man more than anything else with his unnatural paleness and his thin, lantern-jawed face; but what I meant was, do you know the man's reputation?"

"Yes, I believe so," Mercedes answered, composedly.

"A gambler—a regular card-sharp who lives by his wits, whose days are passed in sleep and nights in robbing greenhorns of their hard-earned money. Ever since the fellow came to town I've been wishing that he'd tackle some man of my company and fleece him."

"Why, what a wish!" the girl exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Then I'd get a chance at him. My command takes in this town. I'd drum-head a court-martial and give him a hundred lashes as a warning to all the rest of the thieving tribe."

"I'm afraid, major, that the citizens wouldn't stand that," she said.

"Let the chance come, and see how quick I'll improve it!" he exclaimed. "But now, honestly, I am really astonished at your conduct. For the past week I have noticed that this man has kept out of the town; he has avoided you and, by Jove! you take the trouble to hunt him up!"

"If the mountain won't come to Mahomet, you know—Mercedes said, smiling.

"Mahomet must go to the mountain, eh?" the girl nodded.

"The fellow won't come to you, and so you go after him."

"How sagacious you are!" Mercedes did not seem at all disturbed at the discovery the major had made, and was not at all disposed to deny her share in the matter.

"Mercedes, when you in love with the fellow?" Germaine asked, smiling. "If so, say it and that ends the matter as far as I am concerned."

up his horses, and he felt the hair upon his head rising in terror.

"Holy Moses! what the devil's that?" he muttered. "Paddy O'Hoolahan, I have come for you!" said the figure in strange, hollow tones.

"If it's a trick yer after, I'll plug a hole through ye!" Paddy cried, in an agony of terror, and catching up his rifle he leveled it at the unknown and pulled the trigger.

For the first time since Paddy had possessed the weapon the rifle missed fire.

Three times the fear-stricken Irishman pulled the trigger, and three times the cap refused to explode. Then, with unsteady hands he grasped his revolver, and they, too, refused to perform their office.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the stranger, in sepulchral tones, from the shadows below. "O'Hoolahan, Satan waits for you!"

And then the stranger threw back the black cloak and a skeleton form appeared beneath it.

This was quite enough for Paddy. With a howl of terror he leaped from the box of the coach and fled toward Deadwood at the top of his speed.

Paddy was not anxious to make the acquaintance of his Satan's majesty just yet.

The short legs of the Irishman soon carried him down into the gulch out of sight, and then the horseman rapidly approached the back.

From under the driver's seat he drew the mail-bag, nimble dismounted from his horse and then proceeded to examine the fastenings of the bag.

He produced a bunch of keys and tried them, one by one, in the lock of the bag.

At last, one fit, and with an exclamation of delight that savored far more of earth than it did of the shades below, he poured the letters out upon the ground.

A motley collection of epistles, and directed in all kinds of hands from the scrawl of the uneducated foreigner to the round, clearly inscription of the college graduate.

Rapidly, one by one, the mysterious stranger ran the letters over in his hand, and with a gasp of astonishment he perceived that he had secured some particular letter, and believed that he could identify it by the handwriting.

"No, here, not here," he muttered, as the last of the letters fell from his hands. "Can I have missed one in my haste?" And then again he examined the letters, but the second scrutiny was as fruitless as the first.

"Am I to be forever baffled in my search?" he muttered. "Is there no special providence to lead this man into my hands that I may call him to an account?"

And then as the stranger, masquerading in such an old-fashioned costume, to his eyes, the white horse, which had been quietly cropping the prairie grass a few feet off, put its muzzle up in the air and began to sniff the breeze from the north.

The man noted this.

"Hey, old girl, what's the matter? Danger, eh? White man or Indian?"

A loud neigh coming from the gully answered the question.

And then, as if the new comers had guessed that it would be useless to attempt to conceal the truth, the white horse stepped forward and the rider leaped to his feet, and the white horse, which had been quietly cropping the prairie grass a few feet off, put its muzzle up in the air and began to sniff the breeze from the north.

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drawing-rooms were thronged with her literary acquaintances, all of whom were set on the quiver by her promise of an introduction to a new beauty before the evening was over. At ten o'clock, just as the freshness and interest of the literary discussions were beginning to die away, the servant threw open the door, and announced "Mr. and Mrs. Oliver."

There was a general murmur of surprise, and every one came hurrying from the other rooms, in time to see Miss Marchmont advance to receive her guests. It was no mistake on the part of the servant! Francis Oliver stood before them, with a ludicrously stiff and embarrassed air, and Miss Marchmont was shaking hands with a little fairy in white silk, with a wreath of lilies of the valley in her dark hair—the prettiest woman who had made her debut in a London drawing-room during the whole season.

Nowhere did Miss Marchmont appear to greater advantage than in her own house. Abroad, she was often apt to be somewhat brusque in her manner, somewhat dictatorial in her mode of speech; but when she received her guests beneath her own roof, all this harshness was toned down, and a gentle anxiety to please, which was infinitely more charming, took its place. Under the protection of her own household gods she could afford to be her better self, and the stranger within her gates was as sacred in her eyes as if she had been born beneath the tent of a Bedouin sheik. No one ever had reason to complain of their welcome or their entertainment in Mayfair, however coldly the lady of the house might have treated them at other times, and in other homes.

Kitty's visit had, of course, been confined to the rustic circle, of which she was the favorite and the belle. In that humble village people went to see each other, because they found pleasure in so doing, and welcomed each other kindly, because their hearts were full of goodwill. The country girl was simple enough to imagine that the same state of things existed in London. She knew nothing of the art of freezing human beings into nonentities, which is practiced with such perfect success in good society. She had no idea that a host or hostess might, like "Mary in the birchen lane" of the old song, often "say one thing and mean another," and welcome her cordially to house and home with their lips, while in their hearts they wished her at the bottom of the Red Sea.

Consequently, the marked kindness of Miss Marchmont's reception was in one sense lost upon her. But Mr. Oliver felt it deeply. Whatever Miss Marchmont did, became the fashion among her own peculiar circle, and there was little fear of Kitty after she had been so kindly sheltered by that protecting hand.

It was a nervous ordeal for so proud and so sensitive a man. The men and women to whom his wife was about to be presented, were of the royal rank in literature, highly educated, satirical, and fastidious to a fault. Among the group was one of the most celebrated writers of the day, famous above all other things for the skill with which he fastened upon some salient point in a character, gave it a humorous twist, and held it up for the amusement of his readers. The man could no more help quizzing than he could breathing; what if he should select Kitty as the model for his new heroine? Mr. Oliver trembled and wiped his forehead at the bare idea, and finally sought refuge in the chess-parlor, quite unable to stand and watch the process of victimization as it went on.

Mr. Oliver called himself a student of human nature, but he flattered himself that he understood the world and its people a trifle better than most of his neighbors. But, with all his wisdom, he had never learned one thing, which little Kitty seemed to understand intuitively. It was this: That no man or woman can ever be ridiculous so long as they are simply and naturally themselves. If we go frankly into society and say, "Here I am, ugly, awkward, stupid, it may be, but still ready to do my best to please," we are accepted as frankly among those whose opinion is worth caring for; and our ugliness, our awkwardness, our stupidity is forgiven and overlooked. But when we seek to go beyond our natural places—when we wear borrowed feathers when we ape airs and graces—when we endeavor in every way possible, as the old song has it, "to astonish the Browns," we make spectacles of ourselves and, as a matter of course, find society laughing heartily, both at the attempts and the ludicrous failures.

Little Kitty met her new acquaintances frankly and simply, but with a shy, timid grace that went very far to win their hearts. She talked with people, who had hitherto been known to her only through their books, and, with their help, talked very well. Miss Marchmont said little, but listened attentively and watched Kitty's face when she was not looking her way.

The great humorist sat down beside the young wife, and seemed to forget that his mission in life was to quiz every human being who fell in his way, for he was listening to her account of the little cottage, and the good old father, and the faithful house-dog she had left behind, as if she was repeating a sweet little poem. A young poet, who had been admiring her fresh and artless beauty for some time in silence, now joined in the conversation, and asked her some questions about the New Forest. There Kitty was perfectly at home. Her face flushed up, her eyes kindled, her lips smiled upon the speaker, and for the next ten minutes green trees waved over the heads of the listeners, forest brooks murmured, and wild birds sang. Kitty had the gift of description, which places a scene before the hearer's eye, with all its poetry of life, and color and motion, and the authors exchanged glances when she finished, as if they discovered an unexpected prize. Then the "lady of the lost tribes," as the eastern authoress was sportively nicknamed, sat down to the piano, and, urged by her and by them all, Kitty sang a quaint little forest ballad, which she had warbled many a time in the hot summer afternoons beside that well-remembered brook. Her voice, though not peculiarly strong, was very sweet, and the simple, sad music suited it well. Mr. Oliver entered just as the last notes were dying away, and could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw the group that pressed around her with smiles and thanks. As soon as possible he contrived to get beside Miss Marchmont and cross-question her.

"What is it? What have they been doing with her? What has she been singing?"

"One of the sweetest ballads you ever heard in your life. Do you know, Mr. Oliver, she has quite surprised me. I had no idea there was so much in her."

"In little Kitty?"

His eyes dwelt upon his wife a moment with surprise. He could see her beauty, her youth, her freshness as well as any one, but self-esteem blinded him to all else that was worthy of admiration about her. If the humorist had come up to him and said: "Sir, I admire your wife, and consider her a clever as well as a beautiful woman," he would have felt sure that the man

was laughing at him in his sleeve. Kitty was good, she was gentle, she was devoted, faithful, sweet-tempered, and obliging, he was ready to acknowledge all that. But as for any latent talent and hidden genius, any possibility of probability of cleverness beneath that simple, modest exterior—pshaw! the idea was quite ridiculous!

So blinded, he took her home that evening when the pleasant party broke up. And since he could not hide from himself that her first appearance had been a decided success, he set it modestly down to the fact of her being his wife! It was to him and to his works that this indirect homage was paid! And, with this gratifying reflection, he bade Kitty good-night and went placidly to sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SEVERED CHAIN.

"There's a love that keeps A constant watch-fire light, With a flame that never sleeps Through the longest winter night. It is not always wise, And it is not always blest, For it brings forth tears and sighs, And it leaves a sighing breast. A fairer lot hath he Who loves awhile, then goes, Like the linnet from the tree, Or the wild bee from the rose. Oh, love! love! love! Soon makes the hair turn gray, When only one fills all the heart, And that one's far away."

SOME months passed by, and the beautiful summer was on the earth once more. Gan Eden smiled in the warm sunshine; but the face of its young mistress was paler and more thoughtful than of old. Something was evidently wrong. Was it the home? It could scarce be that.

And yet as she sat looking out upon the lawn and garden that beautiful May day, she seemed to lack little note of birds, of sunshine, or of flowers. Her husband's last look, fresh from the press, was lying upon her knee.

Kitty, after she had read it, leaned her cheek upon her hand, and went off into a reverie of the most somber description. The publishing of that look had been a bitter mortification to her. It was full of cutting allusions, of bitter complaints, which she understood better than any of its other readers could possibly do.

It seemed strange, indeed, that domestic misery should enter that modern paradise, and so soon!

Living with scarcely a wish ungratified, what cause was there for Kitty's lips ever to breathe a sigh, or for Kitty's heart to throb wearily in her bosom? For a time she had been perfectly happy. Her home was a beautiful one; every wish she formed was quickly indulged, and her husband was as fond and devoted as her lover had been. It was long, long before she would own that she ever missed the small white cottage at Brook, even in her dreams.

For three months the sunshine lasted; then the shadow came. By degrees a dreadful fear crept over the young wife's heart. Could it be that Francis loved her less than when he wooed her from her humble home? He was not often with her. He was scrupulously polite in public, but silent and careless in his manner in private. He yawned, too, scores of times, when she was singing, and excused himself from a *let-to-let* at the fire, by a plea of "business" each evening. She knew it was a false one; she knew he had no "business" to occupy his time; and she grew pale and ill with jealousy—of what or whom she could not say at first.

This was the state of things to which her husband, in his latest additions to his new novel, had made such unnecessary, such cruel allusions. As she read the passages, and knew why, how, and when he had penned them, her courage and her faith gave way.

Thinking all these melancholy thoughts, with the bright May sunshine falling pleasantly around her, Kitty heard a light step in the passage—a light knock at the door.

"Enter," she said, listlessly, for she knew it was not her husband; and Miss Marchmont came in and put her arms around her waist.

"Alone, and sad, I think," she said, gently.

"You are right."

"And what can make you sad?"

Kitty did not answer for a moment. Then she looked up in her friend's face.

"Will you be angry if I ask you a question?"

"I am never angry with you. Ask what you like."

"Why have you never married, Oliver?"

"The lady's cheek flushed deeply.

"Some people would perhaps say because I could not. You know to the contrary how ever. There is a reason; but I would rather not tell it to you."

"I heard you give one last night, Olive, to your cousin Margaret."

"Where were you?"

"Sleeping on the divan in the library at your house. Your voices awoke me. That was the first thing I heard, and the last you said."

"Good heavens, Kitty! I did not mean—"

"I know you would not have said it, if you had known I was there. I think I shall never forget the words: that you had avoided marriage because you believed a man always tired of his wife—that when Mr. Oliver married, you agreed to see the exception to the rule—but—"

Kitty's voice faltered sadly—"since he had known La Stella, you feared he was like all his kind."

Miss Marchmont looked and felt deeply distressed. But she could not retract her words, or tell the young wife that her information was incorrect.

"Have you seen Mr. Oliver since?" she asked, at last.

"No, Oh, Oliver! I have not spoken to him for three days! He has scarcely been in the house during that time. He who was always by my side once. It will kill me. I shall die."

"No," and Miss Marchmont bent down and kissed her forehead. "You shall live, and I shall see you after all. Courage! All will yet be well."

"When?" said Kitty, with a heavy sigh.

"Ah, Oliver, my heart is breaking! I thought I could make him so happy; and it seems to me that he scarcely knows if I am in the world or out of it. Look at his book, too! What will people think of him—of me—of our home—when they see it? Oh, it is too hard—too hard!"

And, burying her face in her hands, she burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

Miss Marchmont scarcely knew what to say. Mr. Oliver's admiration of the new singer was a standing jest among his friends; and though she had hoped to keep it a secret from Kitty, it was out at last. Vexed and annoyed with herself for having been the means of enlightening her, she sat in silence till the storm passed over, and then did her best to heal the wound she had so carelessly made.

"My dear child, don't cry so," she said. "It is nothing—nothing, I assure you. I had heard some idle gossip which I ought not to have listened to."

Some months passed by, and the beautiful summer was on the earth once more. Gan Eden smiled in the warm sunshine; but the face of its young mistress was paler and more thoughtful than of old. Something was evidently wrong. Was it the home? It could scarce be that.

And yet as she sat looking out upon the lawn and garden that beautiful May day, she seemed to lack little note of birds, of sunshine, or of flowers. Her husband's last look, fresh from the press, was lying upon her knee.

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"Some people would perhaps say because I could not. You know to the contrary how ever. There is a reason; but I would rather not tell it to you."

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"Where were you?"

Winning Ways: KITTY ATHERTON'S HEART.

OR, BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

CHAPTER X.

"BREAKING IN."

"Ay, though it throbs at gentlest touch, At sorrow's faintest call, 'Twere better it should ache too much Than never ache at all. The heart—the heart that's truly blest Is never all its own; No ray of glory lights the breast That beats for self alone."

At twelve o'clock, just as Kitty was walking up and down the garden, thinking some what drearily of Brook and her poor old father, a great black Newfoundland dog came blundering through a little gate in the opposite hedge and began to bark at her. He was followed by a lady dressed in black. Kitty's heart stood still. She recognized the stranger of the New Forest. Miss Marchmont walked straight up to her and took her hand.

"My dear, you must excuse this most unceremonious visit, and the bad behavior of Master Frederick," she said. "I found, by the merest accident, that you were living here, and so ran in just as I was. We are near neighbors, Mrs. Oliver; I hope I may soon add, we are near friends."

Kitty looked a moment into the frank, smiling eyes, and all doubts and suspicions of their owner vanished like the morning mist before the morning sun. If Miss Marchmont and Mr. Oliver had ever been fond of each other, would she have sought out his wife in this marked friendly manner? Oh, no! She pressed the kind hand that held her own, and said, shyly, that she longed for a friend. Miss Marchmont had been kind and kissed her. From that moment they were like sisters.

One week from that day Miss Marchmont was "At Home" in Mayfair. Her pretty

instinctively the superstitious Irishman pulled

to be merely a skull surrounded by a dark hat with a peaked crown.

instinctively the superstitious Irishman pulled

instinctively the superstitious Irishman pulled

WHAT THE YEARS TELL.

BY HARRIET ESTHER WARNER.

A maiden as fair as the dawning
Of hope, in life a bright morning,
Was standing beside youth's river,
And watching the crystal waves.
But the rhythmic beat
Of the waves at her feet—
Only murmur that life is sweet.
And she smiled at the musical beating
Of the waves that were ever repeating,
In a monotone, low and tender,
The hope that the spirit craves.
And her laugh was gay,
As she listened away.
To dream of life as a summer day.
But the years told the beautiful maiden
That life was a vessel, grief-laden,
For the hopes of youth's bright springtime
Were buried in loved ones' graves.
Youth's promise so fair
Had vanished in air,
And her heart drifted down to the sea of despair.

Now a world-weary woman is standing
By the river where death's bark is landing,
And she welcomes the cold rushing waters
That over her spirit lavies.
She had watched the years,
With awakening fears,
And learned that life was a river of tears.

SURE-SHOT SETH.

The Boy Rifleman;

OR,

THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY ALLO COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED ROB," "DAKOTA DAN," "OLD DAN BACKBACK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

PRINCIPLE OF THE FLOATING CABIN.

WHEN Seth and Neptune entered the cabin, Vishnia was playing upon the harp from which she had called forth such ravishing strains a few nights previous on Rock Island. The old man motioned Seth to a seat, then sat down himself, and burying his face in his hands remained silent until his daughter had ceased playing. Then, raising his head and nervously running his fingers through his gray locks, he took a book from the shelf near at hand, and turning to Seth, read, in a clear voice, as follows:

"PRINCIPLES OF FLotation.—When a body is plunged into a liquid, it is urged downward by its proper weight, and upward by the buoyant effort of the liquid. If the density of the immersed body is the same as that of the liquid, its weight will be equal to the buoyant effort of the liquid, and it will remain in equilibrium wherever it may be placed. If the density of the body is greater than that of the liquid, its weight will be greater than the buoyant effort and the body will sink to the bottom. If the density of the body is less than that of the liquid, its weight will be less than the buoyant effort, and the body will rise to the surface. The body will continue to rise until the weight of the displaced liquid equals that of the body, when it will come to a rest."

"Now," said the old man, closing the book, "these are the philosophical principles upon which my craft here is constructed. I have always been a firm believer in the ability of talent and genius to construct a submarine house and boat, in which people may live and travel under water as well as on the surface of the earth and water. The former I have demonstrated to my satisfaction. In the first place, I had a reservoir constructed thirty feet long, twelve feet wide, and twelve inches deep. Its capacity, therefore, is three hundred and sixty cubic feet. It was made air-tight, and provided with stop-cock and faucets, and loaded with stone until its density was almost equal to that of the water. Then on top of this reservoir this cabin was erected, and the additional weight caused the reservoir to sink still deeper so that a part of the cabin is submerged. You can see that the threshold of the door is two feet above the floor, which brings the line of flotation nearly the same height above the floor, so that a portion of the cabin is always under water. The cabin, as you saw, was covered with galvanized sheet-iron, all soldered together, and the door and windows made to close hermetically. As the amount of water displaced by the air chamber below, is equal to the weight of the submerged part of the cabin, all I have to do, to sink the whole concern is to open a faucet and let the reservoir fill with water, when down we go. The shape of the roof aids the downward pressure. While thus submerged, we receive fresh air through those pipes overhead that project above the surface of the water."

"But suppose you should sink beyond your depth, then those pipes would sink the interior," said Seth.

"That is an obstacle that I propose to overcome soon," continued the old man, thoughtfully. "I propose to invent an apparatus by which a supply of fresh air can be had at pleasure, even when fathoms below the surface. But, when I wish to rise to the surface, I force the water from the reservoir below by means of this force-pump; and the buoyant effort carries me to the surface. This much have I demonstrated in living under the water. As to traveling under the water, I am a firm believer in its accomplishment, and have already invented a little machine that travels by means of a screw worked by a series of clock-works just underneath the surface of the water. As soon as I had accomplished this, the idea of a self-moving torpedo was suggested to my mind; and as rumors of a war were abroad in the land, I thought it a good time to invent something of the kind, and so I went to work; and how well I succeeded, you have doubtless seen illustrated within the past few days."

"I have seen a savage canoe and raft blown out of the water within the past day or two, if that is what you have reference to," answered Seth, who had become deeply interested in the old man's explanations.

"It is; and if I had possessed more than the two torpedoes, no savage canoe would ever have reached my cabin. Since the last attack, however, I have completed another ready for some desperate emergency, for which I am hourly looking."

"But I do not see how you can send your torpedoes so direct as to intercept the craft of the enemy every time," said Seth.

"Well, it requires care. The instrument being shaped somewhat like a fish, has, what I call 'sights,' on each end, by means of which I get it set on a line directly with the object I wish it to strike. The principal machinery is submerged, and to prevent its sinking, a buoy is attached to it which floats on the water's surface. If the water is smooth and there is no cross waves, or other objects to interfere, the machine will glide away in a line straight as a bullet could travel. When the canoe is reached, an upright wire, that protrudes just above the water, strikes the boat, and having connection with the inside machinery, fires a pistol which in turn fires the magazine, and the explosion follows. So far, I have tested it only on a small scale; but propose to apply the same

motor to a magazine sufficient to blow a ship out of existence."

"I daresay you will succeed; but I am surprised at your coming here, into this wild, savage country to pursue your experiments," said Seth.

"Tis the seclusion, the seclusion, my son, that I sought out here," the old man said, glancing vaguely out across the lake.

"Neptune, then, is not your name?" observed Seth.

"Not at all," was the laconic reply of the old man.

Seth relaxed into silence; he saw that the old man had communicated all that he seemed desirous of doing, and, finally, he rose and going to where Maggie and Vishnia were seated said:

"Maggie, your father and friends mourned you as dead yesterday when they saw this craft sink beneath the waves."

"Poor papa!" said Maggie, sadly, "I know he must have suffered," and the tears welled up into her eyes.

"Yes; and had you been lost I would have considered myself, in a measure, the cause; for I should not have left you the other day when I did."

"You did only what you supposed to be for the best, Seth," she said, gently.

"I know it; but then I cannot be too thoughtful of one who saved my life at great expense to herself."

"It was not only a duty, but a pleasure," Maggie answered, her eyes sparkling with all the true inwardness of a woman's love; "if the future has no perils, I'll never regret the past."

"Well, I hope our dangers are past; but I fear we have much trouble yet to encounter. A few moments ago I saw our enemy, Ivan Le Clercq. Yesterday I stood face to face with him. It is his desire to get you into his power, and me out of existence. He is a desperate character, and I shall always believe that he knew of the intended attack on the Agency, if he did not help plan it. Without some previous merit he could not have attained the power of a war-chief in a single day. I daresay he has been the enemy's agent among us."

"Friend March," called out old Neptune, who was standing at the open door, "will you come this way a moment? I want your opinion on a little matter."

"Yes, sir," answered Seth, and he walked down to the old man.

"What do you think of the prospect for a battle?" the latter asked, pointing out upon the lake where three canoes, filled with savages, were approaching.

"Too promising," answered Seth; "but if you will provide me with a rifle I assure you they'll not all reach here alive, if I know myself."

"That you can have, Seth," replied old Neptune, and turning aside he took a rifle from the wall and handed it to the youth; "I have heard that you are called Sure Shot on account of your marksmanship; so now I want to see your skill demonstrated."

They went out upon the platform. Seth looked the rifle carefully over, balanced it upon his hand, tried the trigger and peeped through the sights. Then with a satisfied air he drew the hammer back, raised the piece, and, taking deliberate aim at the nearest savage, fired. A yell followed the report; and the next moment not a savage was to be seen. They had elevated, over the prow of each canoe, a sort of a breastwork made of slabs thick enough to resist bullets. Three or four of these had been made fast to cross-pieces, and being about five feet long and four wide completely covered the inmates of each boat.

No sooner did Neptune discover this than his face assumed a look of serious gravity. He shook his head in a doubtful manner, and then turning to Seth said:

"I am afraid we will be unable to repel that force."

"They are well covered from bullets, friend Neptune," answered Seth, "and seem determined on the capture of your craft. However, we can prepare to give them a reception."

"Let them come," said the old man, "if they get the boat they'll have to dive for it."

"Then you propose to sink?"

"Come in; I want you to realize the marvels of Nature under the waves," answered the old artisan.

Seth turned and followed him into the cabin. The door was closed and barred, and panels were placed over each window, shutting out the light.

"The Indians are coming again, children," the old man said to the two girls, "and we have got to go down."

Vishnia was unmoved by the news; but Maggie grew a shade pale, and her eyes having sought those of Seth she involuntarily drew nearer to him through fear and the yearnings of her young heart.

Neptune walked to one end of the room and seizing a post that protruded through the floor pulled it upward a few inches.

Instantly, almost, Seth felt a tremor pass through the cabin followed by the rush and roar of water under them. There was a downward motion of the building; a cloud seemed to pass over the windows and the cabin came to rest upon the bottom of the lake. Waves dashed over the structure and quite a shower fell down through the open ventilator onto the floor.

With a feeling akin to awe, Sure Shot Seth realized that the cabin was beneath the waves, and mechanically glanced around as if expecting to see the sides of the structure give way under the pressure upon it. But in a moment all became settled, and stepping under one of the holes in the roof he glanced through it. He saw the blue sky, and heard the surge of the waves above him.

"What do you think of my sub-marine hut, Seth?" the old man asked, his face beaming with satisfaction.

"So far it is a success," answered our hero; "but if the enemy finds out the use of those pipes it would be an easy matter for them to flood us in here."

"But I don't want them to find it out," replied Neptune. "I don't want one of them nosing around."

"But how are you going to prevent their approach?"

"I cannot prevent it; but should one of them dare to look down one of the chimneys he will be shot while in the act."

"Yes, you can do that," replied Seth; for all the youth felt that their situation would be a dangerous one should the enemy make a close investigation of the sunken craft. And this they were likely to do, for the cabin having risen from a previous submersion would doubtless lead to a solution of the mystery connected with it.

Several minutes elapsed. The water had become still. A clear twilight pervaded the submarine hut. Seth went to where Maggie stood, and together the two walked to one of the windows and gazed out. The water around them was clear and transparent almost as the atmosphere. A hundred little minnows darted

and flashed across their vision like birds in the air. Some of them grew bolder and bolder, and approached within a few feet of the window-pane. Presently a whole shoal of large fish came trooping along and began to hover around the window. A huge fellow finally approached the glass slowly, cautiously. He came so close that Seth and Maggie could see his bright eyes, the movement of his fins, and the very quiver of his nose. Its curiosity seemed as great as that of the lovers.

The scene was a beautiful one, rendered all the more grand by the sun's rays, which, falling obliquely upon the water, encircled the fish in all the prismatic colors of the rainbow.

"Isn't that delightful?" exclaimed Maggie, forgetting their danger in her admiration for the scene, and joy at being at Seth's side.

"It is very beautiful," answered Seth, enthusiastically.

"Yes, it is beautiful, my young friends," said Neptune; "but suppose we were in the middle of the sea? What grand sights would be presented to our gaze! Fish of all kinds the monsters of the deep; beautiful submarine forests; mountains and valleys, and the wondrous formations of the coraline polyp. I shall yet complete a boat similar to this, by which I will descend to the bottom of old ocean, and there gaze upon the wonders, and drag to light the mysteries of the deep. I tell you this is no dream—it's stern reality."

"I hope you may be successful, Neptune," replied Seth, "for the dangers and privations you are undergoing in the interest of science deserve great reward."

At this juncture a shadow appeared over the window where the young folks stood.

A little cry burst from Maggie's lips and she shrank closer to Seth, grasping his arm as if to prevent falling. The color faded from her cheeks; her lips grew white with fear; and her eyes became fixed as they gazed upward through the window of the cabin.

"What is it, Maggie?" asked Seth.

"Look!" she answered, removing her face from the pane.

Seth did as directed, and, to his surprise and horror, beheld a canoe resting upon the surface of the lake, nearly over them; while in the craft he could distinctly see four savages, all of whom were gazing down through the clear water at the little window into his very face!

CHAPTER XXXI.

NEPTUNE NEPTUNE NO MORE!

SETH started back in alarm, calling the attention of Neptune to the proximity of the enemy.

The old man evinced some uneasiness, and advancing to the pane, looked out. The foe were still there, the canoe appearing to rest in the air above, so clear and transparent was the water. They were still gazing down at the little window, their black ferret-like eyes seeming to dart rays of diabolical terror into the very souls of our friends.

Neptune stood and watched them for a moment, then turned away. Seth noticed that a look of uneasiness was upon his face; and when he saw the old man take a brace of revolvers from a box on his work-bench and examine their priming, he felt satisfied that something was about to occur—that the cabin was in danger.

"The red scavengers of the forest may give us trouble, my young friends," he said. "They have doubtless discovered the nature of our boat, and may tamper with those air-pipes, three of which are open. But in order that their curiosity should lead them to look through one of the openings, may be fully satisfied, I want each tube guarded, and the moment a red-skin's face appears above it, a bullet put through his savage brain."

"But suppose they undertake to chop off those pipes below water-mark without exposing themselves, what'll we do?" questioned Seth.

"In such a case we will have to rise to the surface and fight it out," replied Neptune.

"Father," cried Vishnia, who was watching at the window, "the canoe is moving over the lake."

"Seth, here is a revolver; watch that tube, will you?" asked Neptune.

Seth took the weapon, and scarcely had he taken his position under the pipe ere a dark object appeared at the upper end, and in a moment all light was excluded therefrom. Believing it to be a red-skin's face, he raised his revolver and fired. A groan of agony, followed by the dripping of something warm upon his hands, and the appearance of daylight at the top of the tube, told the youth that his aim had been fatal. Several drops of blood upon his hands and the floor substantiated this beyond a doubt.

The dip of paddles, the sound of excited voices, and the splash of the water above, told of the excitement that prevailed among the red-skins. And this increased the fears of old Neptune; for he now saw that his submarine hut was not invulnerable to the attack of enemies.

To prevent accident, he caused the panels to be closed over the windows, thus excluding all light except that which struggled faintly down through the pipes above.

For some time the little band was kept in dire suspense by the foe. What their next movement would be, they could not conjecture. They entertained hopes of the red-skins with drawing; but as the moments passed, and their presence continued above, these hopes were dispelled by the sound of a blow like that of an ax, which sent a tremor through the whole building and a chill to the hearts of its inmates.

The meaning was obvious enough—the enemy had attacked the pipes with their hatchets. One blow after another fell in rapid succession.

A cry of terror burst from Vishnia's lips, who, with a look of awful resolve on her father's face, he sprang to the pump in the center of the room. With all the power of a Hercules, he applied himself to the work of saving himself and friends. The cords and veins upon his face and neck swelled out under the mighty internal force that pervaded his whole being.

The pump worked almost noiselessly, and as the water, which overcame the buoyant effort of the structure, was gradually forced from the reservoir beneath by the double-action machine, the submarine cabin began to rise toward the surface. Nothing was more evident of this fact than the cries of dismay and baffled triumph that rose from the lips of the red-skins. Their blows upon the tubes ceased, but were resumed upon the sides of the plated structure with the fury of demons.

The cabin continued to rise rapidly, and in ten minutes' time had reached its line of flotation. Then the faucet and stop-cock were closed, and Neptune's labor was done for the time being.

They had now escaped drowning no doubt to encounter another death more horrible at the hands of the red barbarians thundering at the door. But Seth and the old man resolved to

sell their lives dearly, and with revolvers in hand stood ready for the worst.

The blows of the red-skins fell thick and heavy upon the sides of the building and the door; and our friends knew the thin walls, however strong, could not long resist the terrible assault.

Pushing aside one of the panels that protected a window, Neptune thrust his revolver through the glass and opened a deadly fire upon the foe, driving them beyond range around the angle of the building. This he repeated, with the assistance of Seth, upon the other sides, and to their happy surprise the enemy was compelled to beat a retreat shoreward with serious loss. They had, however, gained a partial victory. They had unraveled the mystery of the submarine hut, and inflicted such damage upon it as would prevent its being sunk with impunity again. The windows were shattered, and in several places the wall had been battered and hacked until daylight was visible through it. In fact, the floating cabin of old Neptune was almost a wreck.

Neptune sighed with the deepest regret as he looked upon the ruthless spoilation of his craft—the end of his vague, but cherished hopes of immortality.

The men went out upon the porch and gazed around them. A shout of triumph greeted them from the western shore, and the presence of the Boy Brigade evoked an answer from the lips of Neptune and Seth. Old Joyful Jim came close to the water's edge and shouted aloud to those upon the craft; but Satan himself seemed to have sent his imps broadcast throughout the Black Woods, and before answer could be given back, a horde of red-skins and the Brigade to fight.

"It seems as though we are all doomed to certain destruction," said the old man, gravely, seriously.

"Yes; those red-skins will give us no peace as long as we are upon this craft," answered Seth; "therefore I would suggest that we leave it under cover of the coming night."

"But, my boy," replied Neptune, "you will not have strength to endure a long, laborious flight. You are thin and pale as a sheet."

"I know I have suffered the loss of strength and blood; but I think I could stand a forced march to the Agency."

"Perhaps," replied Neptune, gazing away like one plunged in deep mental deliberation; then, after several minutes' silence, he continued: "I presume we will have to quit Lake Luster until this Indian war is over; and if so, the sooner we go the better. Therefore we must avail ourselves of the shadows of the coming night, as you suggest, Seth, and get away."

With this understanding, the little party made preparations for flight. A gloom settled upon the brow of Neptune over the thought of deserting his quiet retreat. But Vishnia seemed pleased with the idea that was to release her from the seclusion of a wildwood prison and her dangerous thralldom.

The day wore slowly away, and night at last settled like a pall over the land, enfolding all in one sheet of purple gloom. There was no air stirring; the sky was covered with a sable mist, and a weird, foreboding dullness seemed to pervade all nature. It even affected the spirits of our friends adversely.

Soon after darkness had fully set in, Neptune and his party began their retreat. By means of a long pole, the raft was set in motion by the old man. They moved slowly toward the western shore, the nearest point to land. It was their intention to approach the shore as near as possible, then take to the two rubber boats.

In towing the cumbersome craft across the water, scarcely a sound was produced; and the little band was fast nearing the shore, and building up strong hopes of escaping without detection, when two canoes shot alongside of them and a dozen dusky figures in the boats became visible to the eyes of old Neptune, who was on the lookout for danger.

Turning, he sprang into the cabin and closed the door after him. A yell rose in the night, fiendish and jarring. Blows fell upon the cabin thick and furious. Another attack had begun.

"My God, we are attacked again!" shouted old Neptune, growing furious with rage and disappointment.

A cry of despair escaped the maidens' lips. The light inside was at once put out; the windows opened, and a random firing opened upon the foe; but with but little success. The darkness favored the enemy.

In the midst of the tumult of the attack a shrill cry resembling that of a beaver was heard to come from out upon the lake.

Seth, who stood near the window, recognized it as the cry of Justin Gray, the Beaver, and at once gave an answering signal.

Then from other directions rose the sharp bark of a fox, the howl of a wolf, the scream of a panther, and the hoarse cry of an owl.

There was a lull in the attack as these sounds issued through the night. By bitter experience the savages had learned their import, coming, as they did, together.

"Glory!" exclaimed Seth, beside himself, "the Boy Brigade is near, and rest assured it will give an account of itself, and that soon, too."

The savages resumed the attack on the cabin all the more furious, as if determined to destroy its inmates before the Brigade could come to their assistance. In several places the wall was hewn through, but the covering of sheet-iron closely nailed to the wood, made it difficult for them to effect much headway in gaining an entrance with their light tomahawks. However, they cut and hacked away until suddenly a yell of agony from one of them caused the whole party to suspend operations.

The savage that uttered the cry fell backward into the lake, and although the besieged had kept up a vigorous but random firing, he was the first that received serious injury. That he had been wounded by those inside, his comrades had not a doubt; and having dragged him from the water and placed him in one of their canoes, the attack was resumed.

Scarcely a minute had elapsed when another warrior tumbled into the water with a frightful scream of agony; and as no shot had been fired from the interior of the cabin, the savages knew that a new and silent enemy had appeared upon the scene of action. Silence was imposed upon the party, and all listened with bated breath.

A savage advanced to the edge of the platform in front of the cabin, and leaning forward, peered down at the water. He caught the outlines of a black, spherical object lying upon the surface of the lake not ten feet from him; but before he could make his discovery known, the object raised slightly and thrust forward a long, slender rod with a sharp lance-point which entered his throat, completely severing the windpipe. A half-moon, half-cry, mingled with a horrible gurgling, gasping sound, followed, and the doomed red-skin went overboard into a watery grave.

Something of the truth now began to enter the wild brains of the over-triumphant warriors, and they at once jumped into their canoes and began paddling around in search of the silent, deadly enemy whom they at once suspected of being the Boy Brigade. But their search proved an unfortunate one. At every turn they were met by the deadly point of a knife fixed upon a long pole; and it at once became necessary for them to act upon the defensive. They beat a hasty retreat from the vicinity of Neptune's cabin with the loss of several men and one of their canoes.

No sooner was their flight an assured fact, ere a shout of triumph went up from the water around the cabin; and a moment later five of the Boy Brigade climbed upon the cabin platform, where they were greeted by Sure Shot Seth, their young leader, and old Neptune.

"Boys," said Seth, "you have saved us."

"Glad to hear it, Sure Shot Seth," replied Justin Gray.

"How has it gone with the Brigade since I left it?" asked Seth, anxious to hear from all his followers.

"All right with but one exception. Teddy O'Rook disappeared yesterday, and I presume he is killed."

An exclamation of bitter anguish escaped Seth's lips, for he loved Teddy as a brother.

"We must get away from here," he said; "the enemy is too strong for us. The Brigade can't work when confined to one place."

"Yes; and the sooner you leave the better," said Gray, "for they are growing stronger all the time."

"My son," replied Neptune, "we are all ready to depart—in fact were making ashore for that purpose, when the red barbarians attacked us. I will proceed to launch my canoe at once."

Justin and his four companions did not enter the cabin, for, in taking to the water as they did, they had been compelled to divest themselves of most of their clothing. They entered the canoe that they had captured from the savages and stood out a few rods from the cabin, waiting for the others.

In a few moments Neptune had launched his rubber boats alongside the platform and placed a few simple articles of food and clothing in them. Then the old man and his daughter, and Seth and Maggie bid farewell to the submarine hut and entered the boats. As the small boat would carry but one person, and the large one barely three, the old man took the former, and Seth and the two maidens the latter.

Justin Gray and his four companions left the way; Seth and his four friends came next, while Neptune brought up the rear.

It was with no little difficulty that the leading boat was followed, owing to the darkness and the extreme silence observed by the members of the Brigade in handling their paddles. Seth, however, being once more in his element, with the responsibility of the two maidens' lives resting upon him, exerted every faculty to keep close behind his friends, and to guard against danger. It was this extra precautionary measure that enabled him to detect, when a few rods from shore, a black object creeping stealthily, at right angles toward them; and having ascertained himself that it was a canoe filled with enemies, he at once gave the signal of alarm. But it came too late. The enemy were upon them.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 353.)

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A REMEMBRANCE.

BY HARRIETTE MABEL SPALDING.

A picture waited from the skies,
Framed in fair curls and azure eyes,
Smiles back at me in sweet surprise.

For Memory lends you golden wings,
A brighter, happier clime she sings,
Than that which my existence brings.

'Twas here in childhood's hours we played,
And here we lingered 'neath the shade
That spreading elms and maples made.

Though summer scenes no longer wear
Their glorious brightness everywhere,
Yet love renews them, sweet and fair.

I walk out 'neath the purple sky,
Across whose face the shadows lie,
Then lay the past in silence by.

Great Captains.

DRAKE,

The Knighted Buccaneer.

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

AMONG bold seamen, enterprising adventurers and captains who "fought for the glory of the realm," Francis Drake holds a conspicuous place. And though his career was that of a sea freebooter, cruising on perilous voyages for plunder and gain, he did his country such eminent service against Spain that Englishmen still admire the admiral while they condemn many of the acts that gave him his fame.

Francis Drake, born in 1546, at Tavistock, Devonshire, was the eldest of twelve sons of a poor, though not obscure, yeoman. All the education he obtained was by the aid of his distant relative and godfather, John Hawkins—afterward Admiral Sir John—but this was suddenly cut short by the father's forced flight into Kent, where his sturdy Protestant religious sentiments were more in favor than in Catholic Devonshire. "God dividing the honor betwixt two counties, that one might have his birth and the other his education," said the old chronicler, Fuller. But very little of books he knew, and when Protestant Elizabeth succeeded Catholic Mary, the father was made rector of Upnor church on the Medway, just below Chatham, where the "royal fleet"—what there was of it—usually anchored. This threw the rector's boys much in the company of sailors, and encouraged the natural bent of Francis' taste for the sea. And the father, we are told, "by reason of his poverty, apprenticed him to a neighbor, the master of a bark, who carried on a coasting trade and sometimes made voyages to Zealand and France."

Thus launched on his career at a tender age the boy developed into a strong man. He remained on this bark even after his apprenticeship of five years had expired, and when his master died, having no heirs, he willed the vessel to Francis, who continued coasting and trading until he had accumulated considerable money. Then the fame of John Hawkins' exploits, in the New World, fired the trader with a new ambition—to go cruising down on the Spanish settlements in America; so, selling out his little coaster, he went to Plymouth and enlisted not only himself, in Hawkins' service, but also adventured all his means in that expedition of maraud and spoliation upon the "Spanish Main"—the coast of North and South America, from Florida to Orinoco, (1567.) The expedition was most unfortunate. What with damage by storm and by Spanish guns at Vera Cruz, and a desertion by Drake, with his vessel, Hawkins' disasters were complete. By his excellent seamanship Drake brought his little vessel of 50 tons burthen safely back to Plymouth, and, though he had lost all his means by the adventure, he had acquired an inveterate hate of the Spanish that led him to the not unprofitable vow to prey on Spanish commerce and the exposed estates in the West India islands. To this decision he was helped by the fleet chaplain, who comforted Drake with the pious assurance that he had a right to make a levy on the King of Spain to repair losses. So the only too-willing mariner was joined by others of as easy conscience as himself, and several voyages were made to the West Indies, by which he greatly enriched himself and his companions. "He got some store of money," said Camden, "by playing the seaman and pirate."

To save a pirate's fate, and yet continue his buccaneering career, he obtained from the war office a privateer's commission, (1570), and was so successful in his forays in the West Indies that he sailed, in 1572, with two vessels—one of 70 and one of 25 tons—and seventy-three men and boys, for the Spanish Main. Off the coast of South America he was joined by a third vessel and thirty-eight men. With such a force the daring privateersman actually took and sacked the town of Nombre de Dios; penetrated far enough inland to see the Pacific Ocean, scoured the shipping in the great exchange mart of Porto Bello, overhauled Spanish traders, and, after a year of adventures and exploits, (this affords a singular comment on the rapacity and fierce hatreds of both English and Spaniards,) safely returned to Plymouth, his vessels literally stuffed with treasure and spoils.

On his arrival, August 9th, 1573, it being Sunday, the congregation all left the church to give him welcome, and the wildest joy prevailed through all the country. Even people from London came down to see the Sea Rover and his spoils.

Having disposed of his rich cargoes he spent his money in a princely way, and in his devotion to the royal cause, out of the abundance of his riches he equipped three vessels-of-war, with which to aid the old Earl of Essex in subduing the rebellious Irish. This service, on his return to England, after the old Earl's death, so accredited him to royal favor that he was introduced to the Queen.

In this, his first conference, it is stated, Drake disclosed to the Queen a scheme for a descent on the Spanish towns in the "South Sea," by passing the Straits of Magellan. The result of the bold sailor's proposition was an expedition of five vessels—the largest of 100 and the smallest of 15 tons burthen—with a united force of gentlemen and sailors of 164 persons. These gentlemen were young men of noble birth, who, led by the spirit of adventure, and the desire for gain, were eager to enlist under the leadership of so enterprising a captain as Drake—sailing as he did not only with Elizabeth's sanction, but with her aid. Indeed, some authorities assume that she was a "partner" in the adventure—which was one for plunder. The "Virgin Queen," with all her follies and extravagances, had an eye to profit in her schemes, public and private.

The miniature fleet—absurdly little in force and size of vessels, as compared with modern sea operations—sailed Nov. 13th, 1577. It reached the Spanish Main, and running down from Porto Bello along the South American coast, committed almost countless acts of pillage. Port after port was "visited," shipping was destroyed, towns were laid under contri-

bution, and an immense amount of treasure secured that could be stored in small compass. The buccaneers, for such they really were, ran down to Port Julian, in Patagonia, where, a gibbet was found standing—"sure evidence," says one historian, "that a Christian people had been there before them." For what reason is not explained, but certain it is that there Drake executed Martin Doughtie, one of the gentlemen of the expedition, and then sailed on to pass to the "South Sea," through the Straits of Magellan.

He entered the straits, late in August, 1578, in the third European who had ventured through that dangerous channel. It was not, however, until Nov. 6th, that he succeeded in working the passage. Then a furious storm sent the little vessel to the south, and in his fight with the elements he was driven around among the islands of the archipelago of Terra del Fuego, and was the first mariner to sight the Cape of Good Hope.

Making his way northward, to the rendezvous agreed on—the island of Mocha, south of Chili—he thence sailed on up the coast of Chili and Peru, plundering as he went town after town, rifling the unprotected shipping, and ending by seizing a royal galleon, bound for Panama, heavily loaded with treasure for Spain. This seizure quite filled up his vessels; so he headed for the coast, carefully exploring as he ran along the coast, hoping and expecting to discover the long-sought-for passage through the continent, from the Pacific, or "South Sea," to the Atlantic. He ran up to the wintry latitude of 48° north, but no passage appearing, and his crews becoming greatly distressed with the cold, and dissatisfied, he returned southward to San Francisco bay, where he tarried five weeks in its genial climate, to recruit and prepare for what had been resolved upon—to do as Magellan had done—sail for the East Indies. This he did, leaving Port San Francisco, (which he called New Albion, and "took possession of" in the name of Queen Elizabeth), Sept. 29th, 1579. Directing his course to the Molucca Islands, he anchored in Ternate, Nov. 4th—was nearly lost off Celebes—stopped at Java—thence steered across the Indian Ocean for the Cape of Good Hope, passed it in safety, and reached Plymouth, Nov. 3d, 1580, after an absence of nearly three years.

Drake's reception was gracious enough to have flattered the pride of any man. He was the hero of the day. All classes vied in doing honor to the man who had so humbled their common and detested enemy, the Spaniard; who had sailed, amid great perils, in unknown seas; who had added "New Albion" to England's domain, and, by circumnavigating the globe, had asserted England's right to navigate in the "South Sea." But, more than all, the navigator was distinguished for the enormous treasure which he brought home. That, alone, would command the admiration of people and the favor of Queen, Court and Parliament. And, although, on his arrival, Drake was confronted with serious claims from merchants and traders whom he had robbed, and the ministry was compelled to take from his chest enough to cover these just demands, there yet remained sufficient to enrich him and his companions, down to the humblest sailor.

The Queen both gave Drake a court reception and honored him and his ship in a novel way. The vessel was run up a little creek, near Deptford, there to be preserved "as a monument of the most memorable voyage that the English had yet performed;" then Elizabeth, with a select few of her advisers and attendants, partook of a banquet on the little craft, April 4th, 1581; she there knighted the bold buccaneer, and he stepped ashore, holding Elizabeth by the hand, no longer Captain Drake, the privateersman and freebooter, but Sir Francis Drake, the greatest of English navigators.

Thus honored and elevated, the skillful sailor and daring captain became a great favorite in London, and he spent several years basking in the delights of court and society life; but the chronic old war with Spain breaking out with fresh virulence, he went to sea again, in 1585 and 1586, and by his operations at the Cape de Verde islands and in the West Indies "disturbed the Spaniards anew." He raided down on the coasts of Spain and Portugal; he haunted the Canaries; he dropped down on Carthage and other towns on the South American coast, until Philip II. began to regard him with fear. On his return from the descent on the Spanish Main Drake called at Raleigh's Roanoke settlement and took home with him the disconsolate and frightened settlers of the "first English settlement in America." And it was these men and Drake's ships that bore to England the first tobacco introduced to Europe.

Philip, resolved to retaliate "in kind" upon England, made enormous preparations for a descent on the English coast, with the design of destroying and laying waste all the country bordering the two Channels. To cripple this "armada" Elizabeth made Drake commander of a fleet of thirty sail—four naval vessels and the residue supplied by "merchant adventurers," with that of her own yachts. With this fleet, in 1587, he ran down upon Cadiz, and, passing direct into the harbor under the guns of its forts, April 19th, burnt, sunk or captured thirty ships—as many prizes as his crews could handle. The prizes were sent to English ports, while he continued to ravage the coast on up to Cape St. Vincent—destroying or seizing shipping to the number of over one hundred sail and plundering and burning four castles. This he called "singeing the King of Spain's beard." Not content with this, he put into the Tagus, up which the Spanish admiral, the Marquis Santa Cruz, lay with a powerful force of galleys. Drake challenged the Spaniard to come down and "exchange bullets with him"—an invitation the admiral declined. The marquis died soon after—chagrined and mortified over Drake's work having much to do with his illness.

This disastrous blow delayed the great armada a whole year, and Drake then headed for the Azores to catch the treasure ships from India. He was so fortunate as to fall in with and capture a richly-laden "carrock" of great size—a magnificent prize, that made his volunteer merchant ships very happy over their gains.

With his share of the prize he brought good water into the town of Plymouth—a gift for which the people were deeply grateful.

In 1588 occurred the descent of the "Invincible Armada." Drake, as vice-admiral under Lord Howard, high-admiral, with one section of the English fleet, and old Sir John Hawkins with another section, ran out to meet the armada, which consisted of 150 vessels, and galleons of great size, carrying 2650 guns, 8000 sailors and 20,000 soldiers. This tremendous force was to be reinforced at Dunkirk by 34,000 troops.

A heavy gale separated the Spanish ships, the first day out, and Howard, Drake, Hawkins and old Martin Frobisher dogged the Spaniards until, off the Netherlands, a conflict was brought on, in which their enemy was

worsted and compelled to run. But the way through the English Channel was blocked by the English ships, so the Spanish fleet—or what was left of it—had to run around the British isles, by the Orkneys. The English pursued and took prize after prize, and only a remnant of that magnificent and supposed-to-be-invincible armament found its way back to Spain.

Drake's conduct, seamanship and tireless pursuit of the enemy were admirable and added greatly to his fame.

The next year, as admiral and general, Drake went with a fleet and land force to Portugal, to expel the Spaniards and elevate a Portuguese to the throne. The whole scheme was a miserable failure that redounded nothing to Drake's credit, but stained his name with acts of cruelty and folly that history will not let sleep.

After this unhappy failure Sir Francis had no service until 1595, when a powerful fleet under Hawkins and Drake, with a strong force of troops under two other commanders, was sent to strike a heavy blow at the West Indies; but the commanders disagreed and the fleet separated. Hawkins died—his death due to excitement and trouble; Drake was defeated in a desperate attack on Puerto Rico; he then ran over to the Main and destroyed several towns. Remaining at Nombre de Dios while the land force marched across the Isthmus to destroy Panama, the "Isthmus fever" broke out in his crews, and Drake was one of its many victims—dying Dec. 27th, 1595. The fleet was then at Puerto Bello, and in the waters of its bay his body was given a sailor's burial.

The Red Cross;

OR,

The Mystery of Warren-Guilderland.

A ROMANCE OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MAN'S CRUEL LESSON.

It was a brilliant, sunny morning, clear and calm.

She looked around, and then up at Arch Arran. They were in front of a rough board shanty of one room and an outside shed, on the apex of a gentle eminence, the central point of a waste, jagged with bleached stumps, which stretched from horizon to horizon, with but one break to relieve its dreadful monotony—a deserted quarry, half-filled with yellow water, close at hand.

Josie, gazing at Arch, met a look that struck her dumb.

"Well, how do you like our home?" drawled he, dragging her to him with his heavy hands gripping her shoulders, so as to bring her right under his diabolically-laughing eyes.

"Arch—Arran!" was all she could gasp, her lovely rosy paling.

"Yes, my darling, devoted, saintly bride, this is the palatial abode where our blissful union is to take place, and where you are to pass the balance of your innocent and self-sacrificing days. A tolerable sumptuous cage for me to put my love-bird in, now ain't it? An' won't you queen it here, though! I'll bet you'll be the belle of the whole city. There won't be a petticoat fit to hold a candle to you, for beauty, goodness, fine toggeries an' an admirin', adorin' husband. Not to speak of the men that'll be cuttin' each other's throats for a smile from you."

Josie scarcely listened to these mockeries. She was glancing away from his jeering eyes to the miserable cabin and its hideous surroundings, and back again to his jeering eyes, and she was learning such amazing facts that she was stunned. She felt cold and sick, and very, very much frightened.

"How—far—are—we—" quivered she.

He interrupted her, derisively: "From the wicked hole you've escaped from, to reveal in this paradise!" suggested he; "lay your heart at rest, my blessed; not one of the fiendish oppressors shall ever trace you here. You are safe as if you were already in heaven, where of course we know none of them will ever get, except maybe Ned, who is trainin' for a first-class A. L. cherub, I b'lieve. We're forty miles from the Death Gulch, Little Joe, in the heart of the Terrovale Barren, where nobody's ever set foot since I dropped this here bu'sted lead seven years ago, leavin' nothin' behind me but them boards, an' my curse on it for the lonesome, fever-an'-agust, discouragin' devil's-trap on this yearth. In that there hole I sunk two years an' ten thousand dollars. That's the graves of my partners, two es genoine boys es ever died o' hard work an' no hope. Yes, I hate the blasted place so thorough that I knew it was the last place on the crust I would be likely for to keep runnin' over to, and thet's why I fetched you here, my lady, where I wouldn't be the least likely to procure you with my devotions. Ta! ha! ha! Anne an' you are about quits now, ain't you, my dear? And he laughed long and uproariously, pointing his insulting finger right into her tingling face, stamping about and actually wiping the tears of mirth from his eyes. Josie, a very coward in the face of trouble, privation or danger, covered away from this scathing explanation, and sat down on the mossy stone which had served for a door-step. Here she put her pretty little brown, soft and lazy hands to her face, and began to cry in the very depths of chicken-hearted cowardice. Arch, having expended his mirth at her expense, turned off to his mare and busied himself attending to her wants with punctilious care.

"Fall to, lass, use your teeth with dispatch," he conjured her, as he laid before her, in the shelter of the shed, a feed of chopped and condensed hay, procured from his valise; "you've got a long trot before you yet, Di; see that you don't waste your time."

Hearing these sadly-suggestive words, Josie burst into a perfect volley of angry and terrified screams, supplicating invisible Humanity to come and protect her, daring Providence to so far forget its duty as to let her be abandoned in the desert, and furiously reminding her absent mother how infamously she was allowing this brute, monster, murderer to assassinate her, the precious, the peerless Josie Kercheval.

Having attended to the wants of "the queen," Arch strolled back, unceremoniously took her by the arm, set her aside and entered the house. She tore herself out of his grasp as if from the coil of a snake, and stood off blazing.

"How dare you act like this to me?" she shrilly vituperated; "if you touch me again I'll tell you with my nails, I will!"

"Don't be afeared, Miss! I ain't a-goin' to touch you again," sneered Arch.

"Take me right back, take me back, I say," she screamed, clenching her hands and stamping.

ing her dainty foot on the grass, and inflaming her fair countenance with hate and fury; a vivacious spectacle at which the young man gazed in no slight curiosity, never before having enjoyed the sight of a woman mastered by passion.

"Lord! what I've escaped!" said he at last, in a pause of her transport; "a pretty big devil may live quite comfortably in a very small corporation, I see. Well, you're a nut. It's jolly lucky for me that I got the inside track of you without burnin' my nose fust. Great king! however you come to be own sister to the like of—her—gets me. However, this night's work has played me out with the pair of you, an' that's an end of that."

He went inside, looking pensively round the rough, undressed wooden walls, the bare rafters and earthen floor, with the rude fireplace and wide-throated chimney of uncut stones. The one window had lost its last scrap of glass and was protected by a couple of boards nailed over the aperture, and the door hung on one rusted hinge, and when opened stuck in the earth and would not close again. There was neither chair, bedstead nor table there, although a heap of battered cooking-pans and pots lay in a corner. Arch came out from his inspection, took Josie quietly by the arm, she trying furiously to drag away, and walked her inside.

"See here now, you bad-hearted young limb," quoth he, as contemptuously as if she had been a disagreeable child, and an ugly one at that, "look well around you. How will you like to be left all by yourself here, with just as much grub as my box that could hold, after I had put in feed for 'the queen,' left here, forty miles away from home, forty miles from any settlement whatever, right in the very core of the Terrovalles, which has, as you may see, been burned so that there's neither nut nor game for to fall back on; no road but that there half-grown one, which is as like to mislead you as to lead you, runnin' as it do often right into clean forests, where it's all road alike, an' nothin' to p'int on but a chip knocked out of a tree now an' again, eh? Say, my love, dost like the picture?"

Josie looked wildly at him. He could never mean to do it! He would never dare to?

"Take me back, Arch; don't frighten me any more," said the little lady, gently; "it ain't worth while for to vex me too much."

"Ain't a-goin' to confess how much you like an' admire my arrangements for your happiness?" jibed he. "Never mind; you'll know better how you're suited when you've been here a fortnight or so. If you take my advice you'll staid quietly here till I come or send for you; I don't mean to harm you, girl, only to give you a lesson for once in your life, a lesson that nothin' but solitary confinement an' yourself to depend on, could teach you. There's food there, enough for a midge like you for a month to come; you're safe enough from either man or beast, and I kinder guess by the time I send for you to take you back to your folks, you'll be a better girl." Arch was no longer jeering and jibing at her. His tone had grown grave and earnest and his manner more compassionate; the trembling Josie felt encouraged to plead for his indulgence.

"Only take me back with you, an' I'll be anything you like!" urged she, running to him and kneeling on the turf before him, not unmindful of her bright young beauty, and privately calculating confidently upon its effect. Arch divined her thought and sneered at it. "As I don't take no stock in the highfalutin'," he said, dryly, "I wouldn't try 'em on. It's playin' it rayther too low on your humble servant, to expect him to kneel under to you, after all. No use, Miss, I wouldn't hev you at any price for wife, sweetheart or friend, nor yet will I try it on as rescuer of a distressed damsel. I want nothin' to do with you any more."

And he strode off to the shed, and sitting on a shaft of his sulky began to regale himself on ham sandwiches and a bottle of lager. Josie sunk down in a heap just where he had left her, and thought with all her might what she could do to avert the horror that threatened her. We know however that Josie was as stupid as she was pretty, and as ignorant as she was lazy; so that, think as she liked, she could not perceive one ray of light. A variety of purple and impracticable schemes occurred to her, but were each discarded in turn; and meanwhile the "queen" finished her feed; Arch did the same, harnessed up, and the dreaded moment came.

She got up, very pale and subdued, and stood before him.

There was no help for it; she must eat humble pie.

"Take me home, Arch, and I'll never be ugly to Anne again," she muttered. He gazed at her with biting contempt.

"Ay, ay, girl, you're ready for to promise anything, ready to crawl in the dirt, if I'll only let you off and make it all tooral-ooral for you, but I hain't gone to all this trouble for nothin'; I told you I wasn't likely to ring myself in as your tool; nor yet am I likely to be bribed by mammy of Anne. What's she to me now? No, I've brach you here to give you a lesson, you'll mind till the day of your death, an' here you stop till you've learned it. In a fortnight from now I'll send your father for you, an' if you ain't got time to think over your record an' to make up your mind to wipe out some of the blot's thet's onto it—well, you'll be even worse-hearted than I take your mother's daughter for to be. Good-day."

Arch sprung to his seat, Josie gazing wildly still after his cold, bitter face; he gathered up the reins and turned the vehicle on the grassy plateau before the door.

Then she awoke to a sense of the position—another moment and she would be abandoned. She flew with a shriek of fury and fear, and flung herself on the ground in front of "the queen," who recoiled with a snort—glared with bursting eyeballs and crested mane at the unexpected apparition, then swore violently, dashed down the road, at a speed which soon outstripped the sound of the girl's frantic screams.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A WOMAN'S WRATH.

Yes, Anne Kercheval's moaning cry had reached the waking ear of her mother, who, running up-stairs, had found her lying under her window half-senseless; and Anne's first gasped-out words had wrung from the horrified woman the piercing scream which Arch and Josie had heard. Josie had run away! and with her sister's lover! Oh, heartless—shameless—alas! God's hand was lying heavily upon them!

And what could be done? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

The father lay mysteriously stricken down by an unknown sorrow; the brother was but a boy, and a boy whom no one thought of relying upon; pursuit was impossible, and there were no neighbors to whom to apply.

"It is God's will, mother," said Anne, brave, unselfish Anne, putting her own mortal hurt out of sight to soothe her mother's; "she

knows not what she does, the child, and he—ah, most men love a pretty face."

"Oh, my poor Anne, my poor Anne!" was all the mother could sob, clinging round the neck of her one comfort.

The two spent the night by the father's bedside, watching his broken slumbers, hearing in pain and dread his whispered self-reproaches; bending their backs to the burden imposed upon them with the meekness which proved that hardest, cruellest of truths, that the innocent must perforce suffer with the guilty, though the guilty should lay down his life to spare them. They did not even wake Ned; after a glance into his room to assure themselves that he was not an accessory to Josie's infamous flight, they left him to sleep in peace, with all the tender care which such sweet women lavish on the personal comfort of their men folks.

At breakfast, however, it had to come out, and Ned stared round-eyed from one to the other of the two death-pale faces, down which gentle tears were coursing as they trickled out word for word, and without one bitter expression, the story of Josie's treachery. Somehow these faces cowed Ned more than any rough speech could have done. He uttered not a word, kept to himself Josie's threats in the barn, and slunk away as soon as he could to think over the matter by himself. And, while these almost angels went back to their usual daily routine of work and nursing, this half-fledged imp of evil cudgeled his brains to discover how he could turn Josie's escapade to his own private benefit, and grew hot and excited over the dawning hope that now she was a married woman out in the world, he might get out of his cage too, and by clambering on her shoulders reach up to the noble position of idleness and pleasure which was his life's ambition.

He was missing at dinner-time; quite regardless of the acute anxiety which they must suffer on his account he absented himself without a word of warning; careless that that day of all others when his father was laid on a bed of sickness, and the two women were worn with grief and sleeplessness, his services were required to do the rough chores about the house and barn which were inevitable.

No, what was all that to Ned, now he had a chance to do as he liked, unwatched? Let them cut the wood for themselves; feed the horse, dig the day's potatoes, live or die as they pleased; he had something better to do than to slave himself for a couple of women!

But he appeared at tea-time, sadly woe-begone and crestfallen; and seeing no preparation for the evening meal (for what did the suffering ones care for food with neither husband nor son to share it?) he growled, ill-conditioned young whelp as he was:

"Confound it, ain't there any supper for a fellow, after starvin' all day?"

Anne came out of her father's room, very calm and stern, and forcing Ned to meet her eye, said:

"Why did you desert your post to-day, Edwin?"

"Oh, leave me alone. I tell you I'm famished," said he, as roughly as he dared.

"Where were you?" demanded she, firmly.

"None o' your business," he answered, between his teeth, anger and mortification rendering him fearless even of her.

"Tell me the truth, don't you dare to defy me!" exclaimed the young girl, with sudden passionate command, for it was striking her with cruel distinctness that had she been always firm with Josie, she would not have been what she was to-day, and that Ned was wading hard in Josie's footsteps in the brutal indulgence of his selfish desires.

He cowed before her, and, writhing with shame and gnashing his teeth with spite at being overcome, mumbled out:

"I went to Silver-Lead for to hear the news."

Anne grew paler, but forced herself to ask, her mother having been attracted to the bedroom door by the voices:

"And what was the news?"

"Arran was in his store as usual, an' not a soul seemed to know anything about it," mumbled he.

Mrs. Kercheval hurried forward, Anne being too startled to utter another word, and asked:

"What did Arch say?"

Ned's sullen face grew blood-red, and he clenched his hands.

"Ah, I see," said Anne, sarcastically, "he kicked you out of his house for your officiousness. Well, did you see your sister?"

It was noticeable that Anne called the wicked Josie his sister, seeming to disclaim any connection with her. It was the first time she had ever put in speech a certain secret feeling of alienation from these two, and the fact of their life-long complicity with each other.

"She wasn't thar at all!" Ned burst out: "I wouldn't have believed him, but I'd asked his old darkey 'Lida before I saw him at all, an' she looked as if she thought I was crazy."

"What? Arran has not gone to California, and she is not in his house? Are you sure she isn't?" cried Anne, in bewilderment.

"As sure as fate," promptly swore the boy: "I went through every room, and thar wasn't a sign of her or anything belongin' to her. 'The queen' was in her stable lookin' as if she hadn't been out for a week; an' 'Lida vowed that Arch hadn't left the house at all last night. An', what's more, not a soul in the town had seen 'em out. I guess Anne was dreamin' about it being Arch; it must ha' been some other chap; she knowed a feller down to Spike's blacksmith's. They used to go drivin' when you sent her out to pick berries, an' then he'd buy her a quart or two an' send her home."

Mother and daughter eyed each other, their modest faces burning. Josie's fearless course filled them with innocent terror.

"What if you've been mistaken all the time in supposing it was Arch?" suggested Mrs. Kercheval, a wishful hope for Anne's sake springing up in her heart. But Anne knew too well; she shook her head mournfully.

"No chance of that," she sighed, "but if this is true, where can she be?"

"That question I must go and ask him," said the elder lady, sternly, a distressed flush on her thin cheek. "Surely he could not wrong my child." Anne turned away with a spasm of anguish.

Arch had already shown himself base enough to cast her off for preferring her duty to him—was it really impossible for him to enact a baser part yet?

Mrs. Kercheval started at once for Silver-Lead, Ned driving her in the broken-down rattle-trap of a wagon, with a horse that was too old and ill-fed to make the ten miles in less than three hours.

Meanwhile, devoted Anne sat by her father's bed and prayed for his restoration, her mother's comfort, and Josie's penitent return. She asked nothing for herself, except strength to work for them.

It was two o'clock of the morning when she heard the rattle of wheels at the door; she staggered out to meet the worst. Mrs. Ker-

cheval almost fell at her feet; Anne caught her in her arms and tenderly pressing her to her panting bosom, bade her remember that she had yet one daughter left to her.

For Josie was not there.

By-and-by, amid bursting sobs, the unhappy mother faltered out her story. Arch Arran, taxed with Josie's abduction, had defied Mrs. Kercheval to prove the allegation. He refused to discuss the matter at all with her. He had said that if Anne said she had seen Josie's departure in his company, she ought to prove it. And, finally, he had sworn with bitter violence that he was no more to have with Josie than he was with Ned, and had as little notion of eloping with her.

In vain had Mrs. Kercheval entreated, commanded, quoted their bygone friendship; Josie was impenetrable. In this miserable crisis there was but one glimmer of relief. No one suspected the affair, no one dreamed of Josie's absence from her father's roof.

Anne consoled her mother as well as she could, but when she at last crept to her own room, her very soul rose up in sober fury against Arch, for his wickedness and dissimulation. She believed the worst. And the worst! Look at the maiden, writhing in her vestal purity before the shadow of shame, while her low moan quivers forth chokingly:

"Lost Josie! Oh, Arch, Arch, Arch!"

Next day Mrs. Kercheval succumbed to her doom; took to her bed, and began to pray for resignation to die. Jonas still lay delirious, babbling of the inevitable past; and Ned even then heartlessly deserted Anne, and left her to fight with the grim alternatives of work or want, by herself.

She went out under the wide sky, and looking up, earnestly said:

"My God, you see all this! Help! help!"

She then bent her back to the burden and staggered on patiently.

Both parents were now ill of maladies which no medicine could reach—broken hearts. Besides, for a long while, their fare had been so meager that their strength was at its lowest ebb even before these blows had fallen upon them. There was nothing in the house now but a few pounds of rice and some tea, absolutely nothing else! There was not one cent; for Josie had, for her burning shame, robbed her father's poor little money-box of its last coin the night she went; nor had the poor man ever had credit in the town, nor one friend of whom he could have borrowed, were they to perish, except Arch, who was now the last person on earth to ask assistance from.

Kercheval had spoken of mortgaging the farm to a certain land-agent in Silver-Lead, but here he was lying unconscious of the fatal need of the transaction being achieved, and Anne was totally ignorant of even the name of the person. Besides which she was tied to her parents' bedside, and Ned was missing. She boiled some rice as daintily as she could, making it delicately white, and when cooked, quite dry, and the particles separate and fluffy, and sprinkling a little sugar over it, presented it, with cups of tea, to her invalids, the latter minus the milk, as Ned was not at home to ride to their nearest neighbor for their usual supply, a distance of four miles. The dish was approved of, and Anne retired with a dim smile. When the next meal-time came, she beat up the rice that was left from dinner into a paste, toasted it in slices on the gridiron, and served it to her parents with an apology for the reappearance of the cereal, explaining it away on the ground of economy; and again they ate and praised her dish. The night passed, and Ned did not return. Anne lay on the sofa drawn into the little passage between the two rooms where they lay, and dozed fitfully, as exhausted nature mercifully granted her oblivion. At dawn she slipped outside and again gazed sadly and earnestly at the heavens where she believed the Author of the Universe to be watching her, with benignant intention. "Our daily bread," she implored. Nothing answered in the deep, cloudless sky, but the waters of the lake, usually so still and lifeless, stirred in concentric rings which the sunshine glittered upon. Anne bowed her head in solemn adoration—these rings meant leaping fish. She ran to the poor old crazy boat which was drawn up under an open shed on the shore, and, placing in it the oars, and Ned's pole and lines, she lightly ran it into the water, sprung in, and rowed away to the spot where the passing shoal of fish disturbed the placid expanse.

Her trials fared well at breakfast that day. They had fresh, crisp salmon-trout, and a most delicate kind of bread, of a material which she playfully refused to tell her mother the name of. The cakes were made of rice, ground to flour between two stones, and baked to a crisp in the oven.

Somewhat after this fashion did Anne keep the life in these helpless beings, for four days. During all that time Ned never made his appearance, and Anne could never escape long enough from her sick to go and ask for help. She sometimes thanked God for this among all His other mercies to her and her beloved ones—for Anne Kercheval was not the creature to demand from her Creator, as hers by right, comfort and happiness; he richly knightly blood that ran in her veins from that ancient heroine, St. Lewan, burned shamefully in her proud young cheek at the very idea of suing charity (for what else could it be, since she could never repay it) from the indifferent world. She had exhausted her ingenuity in the variety of modes in which she had prepared her one commodity; deceiving even her mother for some time, so that she never suspected the grim facts until, noticing Anne's increasing transparency and hectic excitability, she had crawled from her bed in her momentary absence to look for something strengthening to force on Anne; when she discovered the one paper package of rice, half down, and all the poor girl's pitiful little devices to produce different effects with the one ingredient.

Anne came in anon to find her mother, a white trembling apparition, on her knees on the buttery floor, her hands and streaming eyes supplicating the heavens.

She turned flashing on Anne, ready to annihilate her for daring to stay and perish for hunger with such a God-accursed pair as Jonas and her; but the yearning love and anguish of dear Anne's gaze struck to her very soul, and she tottered into her arms, passionately thanking God that He had permitted her to know on earth a spirit so divine as blessed Anne Kercheval's.

And after that, they seasoned their inevitable dish with love.

Then Gaylure's anonymous letter came to Jonas, and a new misfortune assailed them.

Anne brought the letter to him as he lay in his customary apathy in bed, seemingly waiting only for death, and scarcely expecting he would notice what she said, gave the envelope into his passive hand, telling him what it was. To her terror he clutched it, sat up at once—trembling, agitated, and full of urgent anxiety that she would retire and let him open it by himself; she did so, and ten minutes afterward was startled by the apparition of her father,

dressed in the threadbare old-fashioned garments which were his best, white-faced and glittering-eyed, coming with a firm step into the kitchen.

"Oh, my dear!" gasped his wife from her sofa, unspeakably shocked.

Anne supported him to a seat, he striving irritably to shake her off, and insisting on his perfect capability to take care of himself; then she got him a cup of tea and one of her rice biscuits, and he ate and drank eagerly, as he had not done for months. Then he said:

"I am going a journey; a letter summons me. When I come back I may have some thing strange to tell you. Have we any money for my traveling expenses?"

His women glanced at each other eagerly. They thought he had received some offer of employment from some unknown friend, and that he refrained from exciting their hopes by revealing the matter until he had secured it; and the knowledge that there was not one cent in their possession seemed doubly cruel at such a crisis.

"I see, there is none," said he, choking. "Great God! what an unnatural beast I am!" He staggered out from their loving remonstrances, and they saw him wandering to and fro in the dismal marsh that surrounded the house, head hanging and hands clenched. He went at last to the barn and looked long at the wretched nag and tumble-down wagon, which were the only pieces of property still convertible into cash; but then he glanced toward the house where his devoted victims were starving, and raising his clenched fist with a passionate gesture, as if he blasphemously denounced his Creator, he stole away and wandered as before.

They were on their knees, imploring God for him, when he came to the cottage door and looked at them, his features convulsed.

"Darlings," he sighed, in a dying voice, "I must leave you!"

They ran and encircled him with their arms. "Take Dolly and the wagon, do, dearest," they implored; "don't let this last chance slip from us for want of a few dollars."

He sternly refused. What! was he to forsake them, taking away with him their last penny? No, he should walk—doubtless he would get a lift now and again. They fell at his feet, they pleaded with eloquent tears and love that he would not kill himself, whom they cherished beyond their own lives, but would listen to reason and leave them to hope for his return, instead of dying of apprehension on his account. Then he affected to be persuaded, and after holding each in his arms solemnly and silently, drove away toward Silver-Lead with the last of their property.

The innocents thanked Heaven for his docility, and meekly sat down to wait developments; but in a few hours their calmness was cruelly disturbed by the arrival of a man from Silver-Lead, who brought on his saddle a package of such provisions as Silver-Lead afforded, and a roll of bank-notes, rolled up in a line from Jonas, saying that he had found a purchaser for Dolly and the wagon, which fact had smoothed away all difficulties, etc., etc.

"Who bought them?" inquired Anne, suspiciously.

"Arran," said the man.

Mother and daughter looked at each other, each tender face hardening and burning shamefully. The father had not heard a word of Josie's disgrace, and Arch had taken advantage of his ignorance to insult them with this bribe. They spoke up simultaneously:

"Please take these things back—we can't accept them." Then seeing the amazement of the honest fellow, and recollecting that as yet Silver-Lead was unaware of their disgrace, Mrs. Kercheval added more calmly:

"I am sorry to trouble you, Mr. Macdonald, but there has been a mistake made here through Mr. Kercheval's ignorance of how our accounts stand with Mr. Arran. Mr. Kercheval has been very ill, and of course did not understand. Return the package and money to Mr. Arran with my compliments, and say please that we require nothing from him."

So the fresh meat, and the beautiful potatoes, vegetables and wheat flour, for which their souls longed, were all sent away, and they returned to their loathed rice, shuddering, but self-respecting.

Six days afterward, the mother was lying white as her pillows by the open window, gazing upward with rapt, expectant eyes, as if she saw already heaven's gates ajar, and Anne was sewing blindly on some house linen which she was musing would never be wanted more, since their last mouthful was eaten, and even the rice-bag was empty; when Arch walked into the kitchen and stood, looking from one to the other with a sort of forced scowl, through which his dark face quivered.

"I— couldn't stop away longer," he growled.

"How're ye gettin' along?"

Anne rose quickly, her large, famine-brightened eyes flaring.

"Come with me," she said, very lowly, while with her pale hand she beckoned to the cruelly agitated mother to be at peace, for that all would be well; and she swiftly walked out of the cottage and away down the oozy path to the lake, where the boat lay, Arch following her moodily. At the bank she turned on him. You know what Anne suspected of this man, that he had ruined her young, thoughtless sister to revenge himself upon her for rejecting his suit; you know, too, how little Arch deserved such a suspicion. Forgive her then if she met his first wistful proffer of help fiercely, insultingly!

"What have you done with Josie?" demanded she. Under the clear September sky her pinched and famished face and form stood revealed in all their cruel reality, and Arch looked at her, but half-comprehending the cause, yet struck to the soul with the remorse of one who has consigned the desire of his eyes to the torture in a moment of wounded pride. He could not speak; he just looked at Anne. She towered above him, quivering, pulsating in noble wrath, her black eyes seeming to scorch him.

"Do you know what you deserve?" she said, in a low, vibrating tone. "My knife thrust into your black, base heart!"

He heard and winced from this; his first astonishment at her appearance was over; he had accounted for it by putting it to the score of her grief on his and Josie's account.

"Josie's all right, Anne; don't you trouble your head about her; she ain't worth it," said he, gently, forgetting how hard it was for Anne not to misunderstand him.

A hot wave surged crimson over her pure face; it seemed as if her very eyes were suffused with blood, and she covered them in her two fleshless hands while one terrible heart-rending sob tore her bosom. Then she was erect, facing him like an avenging angel.

"Bring her home, and then go where we shall never see you again," she said. "I wonder that you have dared to pollute our home with your presence, except to bring her back." Her scorn, her loathing, shocked and angered him as it had no right to do under the circumstances. He flung back her look fiercely.

"It's mighty easy for you to think the worst of me, it seems," he said, bitterly. "Hev! been in the habit of playin' it as low as all that comes to, that you're so ready to take up an ill report ag'in' me! Guess it would take more than that to get me to b'lieve anything bad of you!"

His injurious tone was incredible to her. What was he, then? A common, mean knave, who would shelter his baseness under a stupid lie?

"Are you implying that you did not take my sister away?" demanded she, paling anew under the pang of that supposed meanness.

"I've nothin' to do with your sister; she ain't any of my funeral," he replied, doggedly. He had come to tell them all about it, and to send Jonas to the Terrovaire for his daughter, but her contemptuous treatment stung him as he had not foreseen, and made it impossible to abase himself by confession to her. For he loved her, and her scorn was more than he could bear.

She fiercely took up his denial. "Do you say this to me, who watched the elopement from my own window?" she cried. "Is it then possible that the man we have been receiving as an honorable friend, is in reality naught but a lying miscreant? Oh, my heart, and I have—"

She checked her admission with a laugh of unutterable disdain, and turned her back upon him.

"Where's your father?" he asked, in a low, hoarse voice, feeling the chasm between them widen fatally.

She turned again, eager to trace any hope of her worthless sister's restoration in his question.

"He's been gone six days. Why do you want him?" she answered.

Arch looked his amazement. "Six days!" echoed he; "why, that's queer; he gave out to us that he was only off for a day or two to prospect around for work. Hain't he come back yet?"

"What do you want with him?" repeated Anne, hiding her surprise and distress at her father's conflicting explanations of his absence as best she might.

"Never mind; since he ain't home I kin do without him, I reckon. I s'pose it ain't any use askin' what the devil Ned's doin' playin' the Old Nick around the countryside with that gang of roughs while you two women do for yourselves in this blasted hole, or what your father paid hard cash for; or what's the matter with your mother; or anything that might be supposed to come interestin' to a fellow that once had his chair by your fireside!" said poor Arch, relenting.

"Not the least use," answered she, icily, recollecting from his warning manner, "until you bring my sister back as your lawfully-married wife, never expect to be treated as even the most distant acquaintance, and after you have restored her to us with an honest name, go away and never come back."

All right," said he, moving off with the bitterness of death in his heart, convinced that Anne never had, and never could, love him, and ready to shoot far, forward Josie for making bad so fatally worse. Anne sprang after him as he moved away, with a wrathful: "Don't dare to go away without telling me where you've put my sister."

"She's safe," said he, looking at her with eyes of flame.

"Married?"

"No."

"Oh, God, hear him! Where is she?"

"That's my affair."

"You must answer me."

"When she comes home she can answer it best herself."

"You must, and now."

"No; you've made up your mind I'm a villain, it ain't for me to cry you mercy. Think what you please of me, it's nothin' to me."

"Man, I swear that I will not leave you until you have told me the truth!"

"Anne, I haven't deserved them black thoughts from you. Let me go."

"No!"

"Let me go, I say!"

"No!"

The pair looked in each other's blazing eyes, this pair who had adored each other, and saw nothing but defiance in those sinister depths. She was claspings his arm with her fleshless hands, which still could cling with a vice-like grip; he unloosed the bony fingers, and sprung to his sulky, heedless of her passionate cry.

As he drove off, black with shame and fury, she flung herself into the crazy boat and pushed out into the lake.

By the short cut across the lake she might yet intercept him, and force from him justice for her sister.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 355.)

Stories of Chivalry.

WHO RODE THE BLACK HORSE?

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

ONE bewitching Italian night the distinct sound of hoofs on a flinty mountain road attracted the attention of a young girl who stood on the balcony of an old-time castle. There was nothing in the sound of itself to make her curious, for the mountain road was much frequented at night, and she might have turned again to the flowers which she had plucked from the vines that almost hid the balcony, if the figure of a horse had not suddenly burst into view.

The road passed almost directly beneath her and lost itself in a dark defile among the mountains.

"The horse gallops like the Black Dog!" she said, leaning from the network of vines and fastening her eyes upon the approaching charger. "If it is he I wonder who sits in the saddle. It is near midnight, and Black Dog comes from toward the castle."

Before she had finished the horse was directly beneath the balcony, and she was regarding the person who sat like a gallant in the saddle.

There was no moon, but the brilliant stars enabled the curious maid to distinguish objects with tolerable certainty. The horse was easily recognizable, for in all the country there was not another such steed as the Black Dog.

It was not the horse, then, that commanded the attention of Fera Otta, the beautiful occupant of the balcony.

She knew where the horse belonged—knew at a glance that his knightly owner was not in the luxurious saddle, and saw that flecks of foam were flying from his mouth.

An almost boyish personage rode the Black Dog. The figure was incased in light but serviceable armor. It glittered in the starlight from casque to spur. The visor was raised, but did not afford Fera a view of the face—at least not a view that satisfied her. Once the rider of Black Dog raised his head—

was then beneath the Italian girl—and she caught a glimpse of a face white as ashes.

It seemed the pallid face of a frightened boy.

These observations did not waste two minutes of time. When Fera drew a fresh breath the black horse and his rider had disappeared. "I wonder who rides Black Dog?" she gasped, as if suddenly frightened, and then she stood silent and pale among the vines listening to the sound of hoofs becoming indistinct.

They ceased altogether at length, and for a long time the Italian girl tarried on the balcony as if praying for and expecting a second view of the blooded steed and his mailed rider. But she was not rewarded, and at last she crept reluctantly from her post, leaving the gathered flowers in a disordered heap on the floor.

There was mystery to her in the Black Dog's nocturnal gallop, and we warrant that but little sleep visited her eyes till dawn.

The horse came from the east and had passed westward. In other words, he came from the direction of Gordazi Castle and had disappeared toward the stables of his master.

Therefore, when Fera Otta saw the Black Dog he was merely galloping homeward.

But his rider—who was he? This was the mystery.

Every inhabitant of the country knew the horse, and that no person save his master, Count Otto De Velpez, was permitted to mount him. Therefore, when one saw the Black Dog he saw the handsome young count; the two were inseparable.

This was what startled the Italian girl: the count was not the rider!

Then who was?

A terrible crime which the following morn brought to light deepened the mystery and threw a new and thrilling surprise at Fera's feet.

Castle Otta stood midway between two other Italian castles of prominence and riches. Each was governed by a young count, Fera's friend and admirer.

It was a question among retainers and peasantry as to which count would succeed in the tilt for the girl's heart, for no one could say which she loved best.

One day she rode with Charles Gordazi, the next the Black Dog might be seen in the court of Castle Otta.

Thus affairs stood when the morning revealed the horrible fact that the castle of the Gordazis was countless. The young count Charles had been discovered in his lofty and ancient paneled library, with a stiletto wound in the back—dead!

The affair was wrapped in mystery. No one had noticed the assassin; his arrival and departure seemed tinged with the supernatural.

It is true that the old butler heard voices in the library on the previous night; but he thought that his master, the count, was conversing with the warden of the donjon, and had not investigated.

The tidings that spread like wildfire over the vineyard lands of the district made Fera Otta start, and she felt her face grow pale.

Again the Black Dog, spotted with foam and ridden by a boyish figure, appeared before her eyes. She saw the dark steed gallop homeward—saw herself in the balcony vainly trying to catch a glimpse of his mailed rider's face.

From Castle Gordazi to De Velpez! it was mysterious; it looked criminal. Fera believed that the black animal's rider drove the dagger to the young count's heart.

She shuddered when she thought of the secret that fluttered imprisoned in her heart. She seemed to be the sole witness to the Black Dog's absence from his stables upon the fatal night, and the keeping of the secret made her feel guilty.

The officers of stern Italian law never tried to work up the case, and detective service in those old days was in its infancy, and the human sleuth-hounds found themselves powerless to probe the mystery of Count Charles' death.

"He didn't ride Black Dog!" Fera said to herself, on the night after the awful discovery. She was on the balcony again.

The secret had told upon her. Her face looked haggard, and her eyes did not wear their usual brightness.

All at once, as on the fatal night, the sound of hoofs caused her to start. This time a horse was coming from the west.

A moment later she recognized the proud and stately tread, and saw a steed whose color was night itself emerge from the defile, and gallop, this time slowly, up the road.

The Italian girl held her breath as she leaned over the balcony, and saw the same unmoved rider in Black Dog's saddle. This time the figure was upright, as if a triumph had been achieved. He rode with the grace of a victor in the tournament.

Slowly, as if to afford a study for Fera, he rode beneath her, and as slowly disappeared toward the east.

"The mystery deepens!" the girl exclaimed, starting from the railing with a determined expression on her pale face. "The hand that guides Black Dog guided the dagger to Count Charles' heart. I will avenge him. I care not who rides the black horse—man or demon!"

The next minute the little vine-embowered balcony was deserted, and five minutes had not passed before a noble-looking animal almost as dark as Black Dog, was in the mountain road and upon the track of the mysterious rider.

In the little, page-looking occupant of the saddle one would not at first glance have recognized the beautiful Fera Otta. A drooping plume hid the golden hair that she could not conceal beneath her cap, and her white hands were incased in rich gauntlets.

She rode rapidly over the starlit mountain road in the wake of the black horse.

Since Count Charles' death she had confessed that she was at the hour of the crime entertaining a proposal of marriage from him. Whether she would have decided in his favor she had steadfastly refused to say, which gave Count Otto's friends cause to say that she loved him.

At the time of Charles' death Otto was in Piedmont on business for the state, nor had he returned.

The sound of Black Dog's hoofs did not greet Fera's ears until within several miles of the death-invaded castle. She drew rein suddenly and unsheathed the little sword that looked like a toy on her thigh.

The black horse was returning.

Fera Otta noted this as her eyes flashed at the courted sound of hoofs, and she looked at the place wherein she had drawn rein.

To her right was a solid mass of rock that rose many feet above her head, dark, grim and sullen. The road was not very wide there; and a few feet ahead it turned abruptly to the right, and seemed to burrow in the mountain. The left side of the road overlooked a chasm, at the bottom of which flowed a stream the accredited abode of gnomes and goblins.

To be sure it was not a desirable place for a rencounter; but it was the darkest spot between the two castles, and the one above all others which Fera, in her present frame of mind, would select for a combat with the unknown.

There she waited for Black Dog and his rider, counted the minutes while she listened to the sound of his feet.

At last she saw him turn the curve mentioned above, and raised her sword.

"Halt!"

Fera uttered the command in a stern tone, and saw the gauntleted hand that leaped to a glittering hilt.

"Who art thou?—tell me!" she cried, and with the last word ringing from her lips she drove her steed forward and thrust the sword to the throat of Black Dog's rider!

The next moment there was the musical ring of true steel, and Fera found her slender blade snapped in twain by the hand of her antagonist.

She uttered an exclamation of amazement, and with the broken blade struck Black Dog a blow across the face.

The animal, stung by the pain, for the sword was sharp and cut keenly, reared on his haunches and staggered toward the edge of the road that overlooked the chasm.

Fera saw his rider try to extricate himself; but the Florentine boots seemed imprisoned in the stirrups, and sure to doom him.

It happened in the flash of a second. Black Dog was not to be governed by the hand of his rider. The pain occasioned by the sword seemed to have crazed him, and he slipped on the loose rocks at the edge of the mountain road.

The rider shrieked, the visor fell back, and Fera caught sight of a face young, girlish and as fair as her own. It was the glimpse afforded by an instant, for Black Dog went over the cliffs, carrying with him the boyish figure in shining mail!

The girl remained on the tragic spot till her heart ceased to flutter like a caged bird. Then she turned and rode back to Castle Otta.

It was over; but the mystery was as yet unsolved.

On the following morning Fera stole along the narrow path that followed the chasm's stream for a distance, and discovered—what?

On the bank, too green for the trysting-place of goblins, lay Black Dog dead, and beside his noble form, with his arched neck for a pillow, was the mysterious rider.

Fera lifted the head; it was heavy without the broken casque and missing visor-bars. It was moreover white, deathly, but wondrous fair. A few strands of raven hair were mingled with Black Dog's mane.

She was dead.

Fera Otta removed the armor and found near the head a rich locket, set in jewels. Between the golden clasps she discovered that the possessor loved Count Charles, that she feared that he had won her (Fera's) hand, and it was probable that she had guided the dagger to his heart.

But Fera made another discovery as starting. The fair dead one was Count Otto's beautiful sister Irene.

The mystery was solved; but it was still to remain a secret, though more than Fera were to keep it. Her trusty retainers buried Black Dog and his jealous rider side by side, and Fera, even as the wife of Count Otto, did not choose to cloud his life by revealing the secret.

There is a grave on the bank of the goblin stream, and the name on its cross answers the question: Who rode the black horse?

The count never saw his sister's grave.

HER TREASURES.

BY MARY AINGE DE VERE.

I keep them in the old, old box
That Willie gave me, years ago.
The time we parted on the rocks;
His ship lay swinging to and fro,
At waiting in the lower bay.
I thought my heart would break that day!

The picture with the pensive eyes
Is Willie's? No, dear, that's young Blake,
Who took the West Point highest prize;
He went half crazy for my sake.
Here are a lot of rhymes he wrote,
And here a button off his coat.

Is this his ring? My dearest May,
I never took a ring from him.
This was a gift from Howard Clay.
Just see, the pearls are getting dim!
They say that pearls are tears—what stuff!
The setting looks a little rough!

He was as handsome as a prince—
And jealous! But he went to Rome
Last fall. He's never written since.
I used to visit at his home.
A lovely place beyond Port

"Could sling a fifty-six pounder with it," was the answer.

These were the only coherent sentences he could comprehend, out of the whispered conversation. Denton moved off after a few minutes, as if not caring to be observed in that locality. Pete, too, crept from his hiding-place, and strolled slowly through the camp, much pondering.

"Who's the feller in the wagon?" he said to himself; "that's the next question. He's playin' possum, that's sartin. I've treed some mighty black bizness, if I ain't, sell me. Bet I keep half an eye on that coon."

"What's broke, Pete?" asked the cheerful voice of Bill Grubb. "You look as melancholy as a two-hour-old kitten. Ain't got sick of emigration, hey; and wishing you was back in the States?"

"What's a Ute?" was Pete's answer.

"A what?" asked Bill. "A Ute Injun, do you mean?"

"Dunno," said Pete. "Spect it might be that. Jist wanted to know. Where does these Injuns keep hou e?"

"Far enough west yet. About Brigham's headquarters. Mostly in Utah."

"Tother side the mountings?"

"Sartinly. Nobody ever heard of a Ute anywhere else. What about them?"

"Think I've treed jist the biggest coon you ever seen," was Pete's reply. "Been prospectin' a bit."

"What is it?" asked the scout, curiously.

"Out with it."

Pete, thus requested, drew his companion out of ear-shot of the others, and proceeded to tell him what he had heard.

The scout listened attentively, seeming to think Pete's discovery a very important one.

"There's a mouse hid somewhere," he said, reflectively. "Have you seen the chap that's in the wagon?"

"No. Reckon I will, though, afore he's much older."

"Keep your eye skinned, Pete. They're on the watch for you, and wouldn't stop long to give you a settler. Got your pistol ready?"

"Ain't never without it."

"Don't let this man see you watching. He calculates he's shut our eyes up, and let him keep thinking so. Wouldn't wonder if it was Colonel Green, himself. Jist like his tricks. Think I'll interview Tom Wilson."

While the scout proceeded to seek the guide of the expedition, Pete continued the conversation with his dog, who was now frisking about his legs, as if anxious for a caress.

"Git out, Nicodemus!" said Pete, with dignity. "Ain't got no time now to waste on dogs."

Nick, but we ain't on that bizness now. Trailin' Injuns and girl-thieves and that sort of thing ain't your trade. Best make yourself scarce, Nick. Don't want no interfering with my reflections."

Having got off this grandiloquent phrase for him, Pete walked away in a very dignified manner. There was a mystery extant, and Pete felt his importance as chief detective too much to associate with Nicodemus. Dogs might do in the ordinary affairs of life, but matters like this were above the range of their genius.

Pete's walk through the line of moving wagons next brought him in sight of Minnie, who had left her usual perch, inside one of the vehicles, and was walking, with keen enjoyment of the bright September day, over the thinly-clad soil of the plains.

During the days which had passed since her rescue from the Indians, Minnie had shown her gratitude to Pete by seeking his society on every convenient occasion.

This was partly from the lack of agreeable company of her own age in the emigrant train, but more from her decided sense of gratitude to Pete, and from her wish to improve his manners, so far as lay in her power. She was still full of the missionary spirit.

Moreover, Pete was now respectably dressed, and took the utmost care to keep his face and hands clean, so that he no longer presented the appearance which had once shocked her.

She liked the boy, withal, was too young to be much troubled with notions of social equality, and sought his society from the pure pleasure of it as much as from any other cause.

"Is it not beautiful here?" she cried to him, as he joined her upon the plain. "The sun is so bright, and the air so very soft and clear. And, jist to think of our traveling days and days without seeing a house or meeting a person!"

"Met some Injuns, Minnie," he replied.

"And didn't like their company much, then."

"Now, that is too dreadful to jest about," she said, with a shudder. "I can't get over the sight of that dead man. And to think of two of our poor friends being wounded. I would have liked to take care of them, but they would not let me."

"Both of them?"

"No. I only asked the one. He is in the gray-covered wagon jist ahead of us."

"What did he say?" asked Pete, strongly interested.

"He growled out that he didn't want no brats of girls fooling around him. You can be sure, Pete, I did not ask him twice."

"Has any one had anything to say to you about that Injun bizness?"

"Do you mean about my being carried off from the wagon?"

"Sartinly, that's what I mean."

"Why, of course they have, Pete," she replied, with a laugh. "Nearly everybody in the train has been asking about it."

"Any of them act queer, or look like the feller that done it?"

"I could not tell what he did look like," she replied. "They have all spoken very kindly to me."

"If any one that you don't know says anything more to you, I want you to look close at him, and see if you've ever seed him afore, and tell me what he says."

"Why, what for, Pete?"

"Oh, nothing! I want to find out who that chap was, that's all. Don't you be gettin' skeered. And be mighty keeful you don't say a word about this to nobody."

"Of course I won't," she replied. "I am not a bit afraid, Pete. But I will do what you want, and will keep very quiet."

"You won't tell Mr. Denton?"

"I never tell him anything," she answered, quickly. "He is very kind to me, and I do not know why I should feel different toward him. But I never talk to him as freely as I do to you."

Pete felt inclined to give her his opinion of the reason of her involuntary distrust of her cousin. He was shrewd enough, however, to perceive that it was not advisable to arouse her suspicions. She was too frank in nature to conceal such suspicion from the object of it. He must be secret if he hoped to be successful.

"Do you see that line of dim clouds away off there to the west?" he asked, by way of changing the conversation.

"Certainly I do," she replied, following the direction of his hand.

"You'd calculate that weren't nothin' but a cloud?"

"I am sure it is nothing else."

"You're kind of out, then. Them clouds is the Rocky Mountains."

"What?" she cried, in wonder and doubt.

"The great Rocky Mountains? That faint, low cloud?"

"Jist so. It's all rock, and hill, and tassin' up of the ground, for thousands and thousands of miles."

"But you were never here before. How do you know?"

"Bill Grubb has been here. I have got his word for it."

"Are you not tired, Minnie?" asked the voice of her cousin beside them. "You have been walking these two hours now."

"Oh, no! I am not at all tired," she replied.

"I think I could walk two days without stopping, through this soft air. Everything is so beautiful here."

"A very tiresome sort of beauty," he replied, in a satirical tone.

Pete walked away and left them talking together. This addition to their society was unwelcome to him.

He strolled, as before, leisurely through the line of wagons. He had not gone far before he met the scout.

"Been talking to Tom Wilson," the latter said, after drawing him out of hearing. "I'm afeared we're on the wrong scent, Pete?"

"Can't see it," was Pete's reply.

"Tom says he's known the man in that wagon off and on for years, and that he's on the square."

"Don't swaller that," said Pete, positively.

"If Tom Wilson says so that settles it," replied the scout. "It ain't no road agen: that kin shut Tom's eye up. He's sharp as a steel trap. If he says a man's on the square there's no going back of it."

"He's known him off and on?" asked Pete.

"That's what he says."

"Maybe the feller was on the square when he was on, and off the square when he was off."

"How do you mean?"

"He mought have an honest man's face, and a rascal's face, and only showed Tom Wilson the square face. I've got a notion in my brain-box that the feller ain't no other than Kurnel Green, playin' possum."

"It is not him, Pete. I have jist had a look at him. He is not a bit like the colonel."

"Didn't I hear you say yourself the kurnel had fifty faces? Maybe you ain't seen more than forty-nine of them. The devil that carried off the gal's horse. He's inside the wagons or he's outside, I bet he ain't outside."

To render assurance doubly sure, Pete took another round of the men composing the train, entering into conversation with each in succession, and using his utmost skill to discover any trace of disguise.

That Colonel Green was somewhere in the train he was sure, and if so he must be in disguise.

The boy first whistled Nicodemus to his heels. He could not see what special aid the dog would be, but he had so much confidence in Nick's ability that he thought it best to give him the chance to prove his shrewdness.

"I'm goin' to have a little round, Nicodemus," he said, "and I want you to use your eyes and ears. If you smell a rat anywhere don't hold back on telling me. You've got brains, dog, and I want you to show them now. If you don't I'll skin you."

This alarming threat did not seem to have many terrors for Nicodemus. He followed quietly at his master's heels, and gave no evidence of discovering any suspicious characters.

In fact, he showed a strong inclination on several occasions to desert his post, and visit some more agreeable canine company in the train. These derelictions of duty were sharply reproved by Pete, and the dog kept close to the mark.

The task that Pete had set himself was not to be finished in an hour. He wished to examine every person thoroughly, and the day was done before he was half through.

The next morning he renewed this scrutiny. The first person he spoke to was a sandy-whiskered, dark-faced man, whom he did not recollect noticing before.

The man appeared little inclined to talk, and answered Pete's remarks very curtly. The boy's keen eyes scrutinized his face closely, but it seemed an entirely strange face to him.

Their conversation was interrupted by a violent assault of Nicodemus, who had jist come up, upon the stranger.

The dog sprang round him, violently barking, and making strong efforts to bite him.

"Confound the blasted cur, what ails him!" cried the man, kicking fiercely at the dog.

"Is it your dog?" he asked Pete.

"Yes. That's my dog."

"Take him away then, or I'll give you dead dog-meat mighty soon," said the man, in a rage.

"Git out with you, Nicodemus!" cried Pete to the dog. "Git out, you rascal! Dumno what ails the dog."

"Keep him away from me, or I'll spoil his beauty," cried the man, as the dog slunk away at Pete's stern command. "It's bad enough to be laid up a week with a bad arm, without being set on by dogs as soon as one gets out."

"You're right there, neighbor," said Pete. "I'll have to cure the dog of such tricks. Don't like my dog to show bad manners."

He turned and walked carelessly away.

"You're a boss, Nicodemus," was Pete's comment to himself. "The chap's got up to cheat me, but he ain't cheated you. I'll bet a catty the dog's treed Kurnel Green!"

CHAPTER XXII.

CAUGHT NAPPING AT LAST.

"Keep your weather eye on Bricktop," said Pete to the scout. "If he ain't the coon that we've got to hole, then send me back to Toledo."

"Don't believe it, Pete," answered the scout.

"It's so, jist as sure as shootin'," replied Pete.

"I've been investigatin' him, and so has Nicodemus, and so has the gal. I'll go my left ear on it. Mought shot my eye, but can't shut up the dog's eye."

"You have learnt something new, Pete?"

"Well, if you'd like a little game now, you kin bet on that. I'm a small chap, but I ain't never asleep when there's fun about."

"Tom Wilson is not easily humbugged," said the scout. "The fellow must be cute to shut up that critter's eye. Let's hear your yarn."

Pete forthwith proceeded to detail the result of his investigations, which had been extended over several days from the date of our last chapter.

He had watched his man closely, but cautiously, and had noticed several suspicious evidences of a secret understanding with William Denton.

Usually the two men affected to be utter strangers to each other, which made these hidden proofs of an acquaintanceship doubly doubtful.

Nicodemus, too, had kept up his hostility to the man. He had been sharply reproved for

this display of temper, and manifested his feelings now by growling and showing his teeth, keeping a respectful distance from the ready foot of his foe.

This was the most suspicious circumstance of all to Pete.

"Never known that dog to make a blunder," he said, "and I've known him ever since he was a pup. Hadn't his eyes open when him and me fust got acquainted. Comes from a good family, Nicodemus does, and he's not the dog to bark up the wrong tree."

"I've known dogs to take a set against the best sort of men, without anybody knowing what for," replied the scout.

"Never known Nick to do it," said Pete, positively. "He's got too much judgment for that. I had the fatching up of that dog, and what he don't know ain't worth any dog knowing. Ever see him stand on his head and wag his tail?"

"No."

"Then you don't know what's in the dog, that's all."

"And how about the gal?" asked Bill. "You say she has learnt something."

"This coon's been talkin' to her, sayin' sweet things, and tryin' to soft-soap her. She thinks he's a nice feller. The blasted catamount has got some game in tow, and wants to get on the right side of the gal."

"Did you warn her against him?"

"No, sir-ee! She's jist like a looking-glass. He'd see it all in her afore he talked to her ten minutes. I want him to keep thinkin' that she don't know nothin', and that you and me don't know nothin'. There's a rat-trap set for him, and he's bound to git his nose in it afore a week."

Yet the week passed and the rat's nose was still clear of the trap. The caravan was now in a mountain region, toiling up the gradual slope of the pass, with hardly more evidence of a mountain range about them than they had had on the plains.

Bill Grubb had suddenly changed his mind about going to Denver, and come to the conclusion to accompany the train to California.

This change of base was highly agreeable to his friend, Tom Wilson, though the latter could not guess its cause. Pete and Bill deemed it best to keep their own counsel, and not be too hasty to spring the rat-trap. Too many in possession of their doubts would be very apt to endanger the secret.

For days and weeks they toiled on through the mountain region. The wagons were light, and not heavily freighted, with four good animals in each. They made rapid time, therefore, passing numerous heavier trains on the road.

Yet the distance was so great, and the road so difficult, that it seemed as if the days would stretch into months, and the snows of winter be upon them before they could reach the milder climate of the Pacific slope.

The weather, so far, had kept unusually mild, and our two young friends enjoyed the journey with that zest which only youth can feel.

Pete and Minnie became almost inseparable companions, wearing away the long days with childish conversation and growing strong and rugged by long walks in the clear mountain air.

Pete, much as he had learned to enjoy Minnie's society, did not forget the claims of Bill Grubb upon him. The veteran scout had taken a strong fancy to the boy, and did his utmost to instruct him in the details of border life.

Under this skilled instructor Pete rapidly improved. He had already not only brought down his buffalo with a rifle-ball, but had injured a grizzly bear so badly that the animal fell dead, after a mile's chase of the daring boy.

After this exploit Pete became a hero of the camp, and wore a necklace of the grizzly's claws with as much pride as a mountain Indian wears a similar trophy.

Many Indians had been met on the journey, yet none had shown signs of hostility since the memorable conflict with the Cheyenne war-party.

Colorado was safely crossed, and the barren soil of northern Utah lay behind them, and yet no further attempt had been made against Minnie Ellis. It seemed as if the villains had given up their schemes, when weeks passed on without the least evidence of any hostile plans.

Pete's vigilance was somewhat weakened by this long immunity, and he even began to imagine that he might have wronged Bricktop, as he persisted in calling him—by his doubts.

Joe Prime, as this man called himself, bore every evidence of being a quiet, honest emigrant, and if he was disguised, as Pete had imagined, the disguise was certainly perfect, extending to his manners and speech as well as to his dress.

But Nicodemus was not to be pacified by time. His hostility continued undiminished, though he took good care to keep out of foot-reach of the man, who had made more than one endeavor to bring his existence to an untimely close.

They had now entered the region occupied by the Ute Indians, and Pete's doubts were roused as he saw, every few days of their journey, numbers of these treacherous tribes. He had not forgotten the words he had heard in the wagon, nor did he fail to notice new signs of understanding between Bricktop and William Denton.

Bill Grubb was as watchful as his young friend, and between them they kept up a surveillance, day and night, of the two suspicious characters. This scrutiny was very cautiously conducted, yet no movement of either of the shadowed characters was observed calculated to justify suspicion.

Whether or not they had become aware of this scrutiny they certainly showed no signs of any wrongful intentions against Minnie Ellis, and the lands of the Utes were passed without the least break in the harmony and safety of the travelers.

Utah was passed and Nevada entered. The end of their journey now began to loom up before them, and the spirits of the wearied emigrants were lifted within them into pleasant expectation.

Yet many weary miles still had to be traversed, and the whole rugged width of Nevada to be crossed.

For miles and miles their route lay along the valley of the Humboldt river, the only green pass through a barren desert. Through wild canyons in the mountains they wended their slow way, having occasionally to leave the line of the stream, and seek some more accessible cleft through the endless rocky ranges.

Humboldt canyon was passed in this way, and the train emerged on the western side of the range, at a point known as Gravelly Ford.

Here was the only spot of luxuriant verdure which their eyes had looked upon for weeks, and as was the custom with emigrants, they concluded to halt here for a few days to rest and refit after their weary journey.

But they had not yet left the realm of hostile Indians. The Shoshones dwelt in this re-

gion, and often proved themselves perilous neighbors. It was deemed advisable therefore to post sentinels during the night to guard against a possible assault from the savages.

This duty was delegated to one after another in the train, there being several reliefs made during the night, so as to avoid any danger of the sentinels being overcome with sleep.

"This is your night on, Bill," said Pete, on the last night of their projected stay.

"Yes, I take the first watch."

"I'll have a good nap then. Keep a sharp eye on Bricktop, and all other dangerous critters, and stir me up when you're ready to go to roost. Kind of doubtful of that critter yet."

"This is not the ground for him, so don't get skeered," said the scout. "He'd be scooped up by the Shoshones afore he went far; and I guess he's got sense enough to know it."

When Bill's watch was over he was too sleepy and too unsuspicious of danger to obey Pete's request.

They both slept soundly till morning.

The sun was not well up before the camp was astir, and the busy wagoners preparing to renew the journey which had been for a few days interrupted.

Pete took his usual morning stroll through the camp. As he approached the wagon in which Minnie slept he looked eagerly for her bright face, which usually beamed upon him from the opening curtains of the wagon.

This morning she was not visible.

"Rouse up, there, Minnie," cried Pete, cheerfully. "The sun's an hour high."

No answer came from the wagon.

"Come, Minnie," he repeated. "Breakfast is on the table, and your coffee gettin' cold. Time all travelers was up."

"She is not here," replied a woman from the wagon. "She must have been up before day."

"Sure of that?" asked Pete, in a tone of alarm. "She is not in the camp."

"She must be wandering outside, then. She is not here."

Pete darted off hastily, and in five minutes had traversed the entire locality. No trace of the child was visible, either in or within sight of the camp.

The frightened boy questioned every one in quick accents. No one had seen her since the previous evening.

The alarm rapidly became general. A thorough search of the camp was instituted.

"Who had the morning watch?" asked Bill Grubb, anxiously.

"Joe Prime," said Wilson.

"The blazes he had! And where is he? Where is Bricktop?" asked Pete, angrily.

All eyes looked hastily round. He, too, was not to be seen.

"I'll be fiddled if the devil that stole the gal afore ain't stole her ag'in!" cried Pete. "And if I ain't got for him with a hot foot, you can sell me out, that's all."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SECRET SHOT.

"Is there not some mistake, some unexplained error?" cried William Denton, with an air of great agitation. "It cannot be—my cousin, an innocent young child—who could wish to injure her?"

"Any body who wanted her out of the way," said Bill Grubb, curtly. "It ain't because she's half a baby, but because some other critters are blamed rascals, that the gal's missing."

"This man could have no object in injuring her," continued Denton. "He never saw her before he joined the train. She must be somewhere about the camp. We have not searched fully."

"You kin hunt till y'are blind, and you won't see nothin' before then nor after then," replied Pete. "That chap stole her, and there ain't no use talkin'. And if I don't know him, then sell me, Nicodemus is the boss what twiggled him. He's got a sharp nose for rascals, Nick has. It's curious to me he don't twig another."

"What do you mean, boy?" asked Denton, not relishing Pete's pointed manner.

"Jist what you please. You kin wear the shoe if it fits."

"Why, you young cub—! But it's no time now to banter with a crack-brained young rascal. We must to horse and pursue this kidnapper, if it proves true that he has really stolen my cousin."

"You'd best leave Picayune Pete alone, if you know when you're well off," said the boy. "I know you like a breeze, my sonny. You ain't shet my eye up."

There was a dangerous look in the man's eye as he turned away with an impatient shrug. He evidently had good reasons of his own for not wishing to argue this question with Pete.

"I'll be shot if the fellow ain't kidnapped my horse, as well as the gal," said Bill Grubb, who had hastily left the group a few minutes before. "He's the best animal in the train, and we'll have to ride like blazes to catch him."

"To horse, then!" cried Tom Wilson. "We'll ride him down if there's any luck for the right side."

"And hang him like a thief, if there's a tree ten foot high this side the hills," said the scout.

"Unhitch, lads," cried Wilson. "You'll have to spend a day or two more here. Half a dozen will be enough with us. The rest of you can guard the train. Look out sharp for Shoshones."

While some of the party occupied themselves in preparing their best horses for a hard ride, Bill Grubb had walked out some distance beyond the camp to look for the trail. He had no difficulty in finding it. There were the marks of horses' feet, implanted so plainly in the soil that a child could have followed them.

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THE NEW BABY.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Sure, it has a beautiful eye—
Whenever it doesn't squint it and cry;
And a pretty mouth, so very small;
Save when it's opened for a squall;
And tender hands, so little and fair,
Except when it gets a hold on my hair.
It does not care for feelings or laws—
Still, the sweetest baby that ever was.

It never wakes me from slumber deep,
For it never allows me to get to sleep;
And every hour in the night its squeal
Tingles my ear like a piece of steel.
It tosses and tumbles and kicks to kill,
And twenty nurses can't hold it still;
But I try to keep my temper, because
It's the sweetest baby that ever was.

The people take it and say "How fine!"
It's got the very features of mine;
They tickle it, too, and say to it, "Boo!"
Then the baby answers it with a "Boo-hoo!"
In about 508
Variations and octaves straight;
And then they desire it spanked, because
It's the sweetest baby that ever was.

I put it into a cradle that rocks,
But I'd rather put it into a box
With a very tight lid, for an hour or so,
To make the noise a little low,
So that these weariful eyes could reap
About an inch of coveted sleep.
For soothing syrup is all a loss
On the sweetest baby that ever was.

I've worn the carpet out of sight
By walking around with it at night.
'Tis very light, but it has a charm
Of getting heavy upon my arm.
If I wasn't a Quaker and hate a fuss,
I at least would spank it and raise a fuss;
For I am led to acknowledge the boss
Is the sweetest baby that ever was.

It's taken the curl clear out of my beard,
And you can see that this eye is bleared
With a poke of its fist a week ago,
For as a boxer it is not slow.
It wrestles with me day and night,
And it had only teeth to bite.
I know my nose would suffer a loss
From the sweetest baby that ever was.

They say he's just like his pa, but I
Fail to see it, for I don't cry.
I'm sure I don't deserve to be spanked
With any one who ought to be spanked.
Paragon will put me to sleep,
And chloroform make quiet keep—
But I must stop to trot and toss
The sweetest baby that ever was.

Exorcizing a Ghost.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"DELMAYNE—you're a fool!"
Handsome Delmayne bowed and showed his
teeth through the heavy gold mustache.

"Thanks, very much, Corson."

"But, jesting aside, Del, old fellow, what
can you be thinking of to contemplate marry-
ing a widow when so many charming young
girls are only waiting to jump at an offer from you?"

Delmayne laughed outright at the second
friend's lugubrious countenance.

"Thank you, also, Jesmine. Berkeley, per-
haps you have something to say on the topic
of my engagement to Mrs. Plover?"

Berkeley's eyes widened fully as much as
either Jesmine's or Corson's, and he took his
Victoria Reina from his mouth and held it be-
tween his fingers in total disregard of its short
length and glowing end.

"Engaged! actually engaged to her! Del—
you'll regret it all the days of your life—my
word for it! Understand me—not that Mrs.
Lily Plover is not charmingly beautiful and
fascinating, and minus any 'incumbrance,' as
they call the blessed little bright-eyed children
nowadays—not that I disapprove your choice
personally—but—Del—they say old Plover
walks!"

Mr. Delmayne composedly blew a half-dozen
delicate circling smoke-wreaths over his hand-
some blonde head.

"Ah! Then I am very sure he can but ap-
prove my good taste in substantially subscrib-
ing to the opinion he entertained of his estim-
able wife."

Frank Berkeley threw his extinguished cigar
into the receiver, and arose to leave, with a
glance at his watch.

"Eleven—is it possible! Come, fellows, or
Delmayne'll be twice glad we dropped in.
Bertie—how bright, though, people do say
that Mrs. Plover rules and governs her life
entirely by her late husband's views, and that
whoever follows as his successor must expect
to be only an echo of him."

Hubert Delmayne looked a little vexed.

"We won't discuss Lily any further, boys.
It is enough that she will be my loved and
honored wife in three months. Really going!
Look in again soon."

And then he sat down again in his big loung-
ing-chair, to think of his darling, the one wo-
man he had ever loved well enough to ask to
share his happy, enjoyable life with him—a
life any woman would have been proud to share.

He thought of her lovely, winking face,
with its arch, laughing eyes of dusk, and the
soft, flossy hair that laid in loose, burnished
waves on her low forehead; of her dimpled,
riply-red mouth, and the general nameless,
bewitching charm that was all about her.

And "old Plover walked," or, in other
words, as Berkeley had meant—was quoted on
all occasions, and his peculiar views and tastes
made the measure of pretty Lily's present ac-
tions—unless it was the one great, grand ex-
ception—on exceptions only prove the rule—the
one exception of her second marriage.

Mr. Delmayne looked thoughtfully into the
cheery, glowing fire, and finally, with a loving,
tender smile on his handsome mouth, made
his mental decision on the subject under con-
sideration.

"My darling! It only goes to show what a
loyal little girl she is to the memory of one who
loved her. I rather like it in her; but of course,
after we are married, she will not—"

Wasn't that a genuine masculine decision?
And one that, six months later, when he and
Lily had been happily keeping house three
months, he had occasion to doubt the truth of
for the first time.

It was a bright, summer morning, hardly a
time for a ghost to make its appearance; or
hardly the scene one would care to disturb—
that lovely morning room in Mr. Delmayne's
elegant city residence, with the sunshine light-
ing up the silver breakfast equipments, and
making a wondrous fair glow on Mrs. Del-
mayne's pink ivory cheeks.

Bertie was thinking what a royal good time
he and Lily were having, and what a perfect
model of a wife she was, when her sweet, coax-
ing voice made him glance up from his omelet.

"I am afraid I shall have to make an extra
demand on your check-book this morning,
Bertie. Could I have two hundred dollars? I
want to see about dresses and other notions for
the Branch. We'll be going soon, won't we?"

Mr. Delmayne thoroughly enjoyed her ear-
ger, girlish enthusiasm.

"You can have the check certainly, my
dear. Get what you want—get pretty things,
too, Lily, for I want my wife to be the most
charming little lady at the shore, even if I do

have to live a grass widower through July and
August, excepting Saturdays and Sundays."

Lily looked up in surprise.
"Bertie! You don't mean to tell me you are
not going with our party? You really don't
mean to say you will stay in town all the
week?"

"Except from Saturday night to Monday
noon. I can't leave my business, dear, this
summer. Murchison is in Europe, and I have
everything to look after."

A little frown made Mrs. Delmayne even
more piquant than ever.

"But I'm not used to staying alone in a
hotel, Bertie, and I shouldn't like it. Ralph
never made me do so."

"Ralph!" That was who the fellows called
"old Plover." Delmayne passed his mus-
tache cup calmly to Lily.

"A third full, please, dear—all the same,
I can't help it, much as I wish I could. You
can have a nice quiet time with Mrs. Berkeley
and Miss Jesmine during the week, and when
I run down we'll have a gay lark. Eh, Lily?"

"But—Ralph never did that. He always
stayed all the time."

A flush—faint, and swift, and transient—
darted over his face.

"Your first husband was a rich man, and a
confirmed invalid, and it suited his purse and
inclinations to stay all summer at the sea-
shore. It is impossible for me to do it, dear."

But by the shadow on his wife's face, it
was evident she did not at all appreciate the
difference.

A week after, Mr. Delmayne came in one
evening an hour later than usual, bringing
two or three gentlemen friends with him,
whom he left in the drawing-room while he
went in quest of his wife—his "pretty, grace-
ful little wife" he had told the gentlemen, to
whom he had promised an introduction.

He found her in her dressing-room, ready
for sleep.

"Lily, child, I want you down stairs.
Ryerson and Courtland are there, and Miss
Emerson's lover—and I want you to meet
them."

Lily looked up in surprise.

"Why, Bertie, you are insane to suppose I
will be so foolish as to dress and go down at
this time of night! I think you are very in-
considerate to bring home a parcel of men,
anyhow; Ralph never did such things."

"It is perfectly immaterial to me what
Ralph did—I believe this is my house, and I
would very much like you to come down.
However, if you prefer not—"

Lily's eyes blazed.
"I will not! I was accustomed to quiet,
and considerate treatment while Ralph was
living, and—"

"And you will make me wish he was still
living, if you behave so childish in the fu-
ture!"

It was very unlike Delmayne's loving, tender
self to speak so roughly, but he said to himself,
going down the stairs, that it was enough to
try the patience of Job to have a dead man
thrown in a fellow's face at every turn.

After that, it seemed that the habit grew
more and more strongly on Lily; it was Ralph
here, and Ralph there; Ralph never did this,
or always did that; Ralph wouldn't have pre-
ferred such and such a thing, or would never
have denied her this or that, until, in sheer
desperation, Delmayne poured out his dismay,
and chagrin, and rage into the ear of the man
who had warned him, and been laughed at for
his pains—Berkeley.

"You see I knew what I was talking about,
Del, when I said old Plover walked, and I'll
venture to say he'll never rest in his grave un-
til desperate measures are taken. Wife de-
clares it is an abominable sin in Lily to quote
him so—seeing what a cross, ugly old cur-
mudgeon he was—and rich as Croesus, you
know, of course."

Delmayne knit his brows, thoughtfully.

"I believe Lily loves me, truly and fondly,
and I know I love her above all women, only,
Berkeley, it does try my patience to hear ev-
erything I say, or suggest, or do, or leave un-
done, compared unfavorably with that eternal
Ralph."

"You will have to adopt heroic treatment,
Del, and I'll stand by you, if you'll agree to a
little plan of mine, eh?"

The warm August days had throbbled and
pulsed themselves away in lingering fervent
heat, and September had fairly come—golden-
hazed days, when cool winds came from over
the ocean, and sensible people tarried at the
sea-side, or in the mountains, instead of skurrying
home because the last summer month was
off the calendar.

And among the sensible were Mr. and Mrs.
Berkeley, and Mrs. Herbert Delmayne, who
were enjoying the most delightful of times at
the Ocean House, and convincing themselves
that summer was only an empty name beside
the lusciousness and comfort of early autumn
weather.

As agreed upon, Herbert came down over
Sundays—red letter days to the little lady
who loved him so truly, for all the trouble she
gave him about Ralph, the irrepressible; red
letter days, for all, on this especial Saturday
night when she expected him, Lily's mind
was fully made up, to persuade her lord into a
measure she knew he abhorred.

"You will not say no, I am sure, Bertie,"
she said, an hour or so after he had come, and
while they were promenading the long flower-
basket-plaza of the Ocean.

"Certainly, I will deny you nothing that is
at all reasonable. Tell me, Lily, what I can do
for you?"

She looked so imploringly in his face.

"Only to let me ride, Bertie! So many ladies
do, and I'm sure there can be no harm in it.
Dikel will let me have a horse."

A frown of displeasure, rather an expression
of gravity on his face, made her pause.

"I have so often expressed my opinion of
the women who are bold enough to parade
themselves on horseback, that I think you
know what I will say. My wife must not do
it, dear."

The hot tears welled to her pretty dark eyes.

"I never can do anything I want to do,
till these men and their husbands that ever
lived! I don't see why I should not ride as
well as Mrs. Senator Rothel, or Mrs. Flores-
ton, or Livienne Laidley; I don't believe their
husbands would be so cruel; I know Ralph
never would have refused such a small favor."

Delmayne's face grew white.

"Lily, you are unjust when you call me
cruel and unkind, and—"

Her eyes were angry, passionate.

"Then get me a horse at Dikel's! I tell you
I will ride! Ralph would not object—"

"Not another word! Never mention that
man's name to me again so long as you live; I
hate the very noise of it."

Lily's face was paling with rage.

"You don't hate it any more than I hate
yours; I only wish he were here now, instead
of you!"

Delmayne looked in her eyes, a moment, and

then walked away, his face almost rigid with
pain and anger, so that Berkeley stared in sur-
prise as they met in the hall.

"Jupiter Amman! have you seen a ghost,
Del? You look like one at all events."

He smiled, ghastly indeed.
"I haven't exactly seen one, but—"

Berkeley smiled broadly.

"Ah, yes, Ralph, I presume. Del, I'll engage
to lay him, shall I? Inside of twenty-four
hours."

The entire population seemed to be out of
doors at Long Branch that delicious moonlight
Saturday night; every one seemed to be en-
joying themselves promenading the piazzas,
or loitering in twos and threes on the sands, or
sitting in the summerhouses on the bluff—every
body seemed under the influence of fresh, cool
breezes and silver moonlight, and the solemn,
eternal hymn of the waves as they came mag-
nificently in from seaward, flinging themselves
in triumph on the shore, as if, their mission ac-
complished, they were content to vanish in
pearly, fairy foam—ghosts of waves, per-
haps.

All but Lily Delmayne, from whom her
husband had turned in such wounded, right-
eous anger two hours before. She had been so
hasty, so cruel in her language—she, who wor-
shipped him almost idolatrously—she, who had
thrusted him through and through with that
wickedly thoughtless tongue of hers!

In vain Mrs. Berkeley's lively chat, or other
people's merry gossip; in vain the continued
influences of ocean and sky; Lily was unres-
tful, unhappy, and in despair. She went back
to her room, resolved to seek her husband and
tell him how foolish she had been—how grieved
she was.

She went slowly along the long corridor 'till
she reached her door, and went in, groping in
the half light for the matches, and then—the
light struck, turned toward the chair where
Bertie always sat, to see—not Bertie, her
lord, her darling, but Mr. Berkeley, standing
beside—her first husband, Ralph Plover,
from the crown of his shiny bald head to the
cane between his knees.

A piteous horror paled her face—not fear of
the supernatural, for Mr. Berkeley's presence
forbade that, but fear, sudden, appalling fear to
see the man alive she had thought dead—the
man whom she had said, not two hours before,
she wished was in Herbert's place—the man
she knew now, she had never loved, for all his
kindness and indulgence, as she loved her
noble, handsome, manly husband, whom she
had driven from her by such cruel insult. It
all occurred to her in one moment, as she
stared in the old gentleman's face, and then
she sunk trembling in a chair, just as Herbert
walked in—oh, so handsome, so handsome,
and wearing a pallor on his face that went
straight to her woman's heart.

"Bertie! Bertie! You won't let any one
take me from you? tell me! promise me! prom-
ise me!"

He took her arm in his hand, and turned to
the gentlemen.

"My dear, you have not spoken to Mr.
Berkeley or Mr. Plover. How singular it all
is, isn't it?"

She resolutely turned away, her arm cling-
ing to Herbert.

"I can't—I can't! Bertie, I was so wicked,
but nobody shall take me away from you!"

Mr. Berkeley stepped forward, courteously.

"My dear madam, I really fear Mr. Plover
will feel insulted at your positive neglect of
him. Sir, this is Mrs. Herbert Delmayne, the
widow of—your brother Ralph! Lily, surely
you have a welcome for the brother you never
saw, who has come all the way from India to
look at your husband's grave!"

Afterward, it all came out, the plan of Mr.
Berkeley to make Lily believe, if only for a
moment, that her first husband, whom she
continually brought face to face with Herbert,
was really face to face with herself—to let her
feel, if only for a moment, how very different
it would be were her thoughtless wishes true.

"Bertie, darling," Lily said, with her lovely
head lying on his arm, and her eyes looking
in his—"oh, Bertie, that one awful moment
when I realized what a horror it would be if
you were! Can you ever, ever forgive me? And I
will never mention poor Ralph's name again, as
I have mentioned it, because, Bertie, it is you I
love, and nobody but you, and I'll mind you
and be just as good!"

And would mortal man have rejected such
sweet entreaty for pardon, or such promises
for the future?

And so—the ghost was laid.

"A Fool fer Luck!"

BY JOS. E. BADGER, JR.

"A FOOL fer luck!" suddenly uttered my new-
made friend, the Abilene "cowboy," drawing
the ends of his shaggy mustache into his
mouth, as though fearful of losing even a drop
of the amber "pizen" that had so recently filled
the glass before him. "A fool fer luck, stranger!
I've held that a-way ever since I fust struck
a little cuss up in the Diamond Gulch diggin's,
which the boys, they used to call him Leather-
head for short. Everybody 'ud his mate called
him that, 'till it just suited him to a T-y-y;
though he *did* show me a letter once, which
his name was writ onto it, 'Thomas Weather-
head, Esquire,' an' he kem out 'mong us old
'40-ers, fer to make his fortin; good lawd!"

"I reckon you've seed lots o' jest sech fel-
lers es he was, stranger, back thar in the
towns; them dough-boy fellers which they call
squirts, in them thar wimmen-*fixin'* stores in
St. Joe. He looked like one on 'em. He kep'
his han's kivered fer fear they'd sunburn, wore
store-clo'es, parted his ha'r in the middle an'
smiled louder'n a he-mussrat on a rampage.
That was when he fust struck our camp, but
he soon got some o' the kinks truck out o' him,
you hear me!"

"Twas old 'Headlight' buck the greenny in
fust. What does the old rip do but go 'salty'
a hole—whar some o' the boys sot out to bury
French Pat, which same was rubbed out in a
little argument with Tom Stamper, but a free
fight started out to Slaughter's, an' the boys hed
to take that in, an' so Frenchy was jest chucked
in the drink, to save time. As I was sayin',
old 'Headlight'—the out-doin'test nose you ever
sawn on human critter!—he salted this hole
an' sold it to Leatherhead for the best payin'-
est claim this side o' monkey-heaven! Mobbe
we didn't hev good fun a-watchin' the greenny.
The little cuss worked, too, just 's though he
meant it. Mobbe ef he'd hed decent raisin',
out yere on the peraries, whackin' bulls or sech
like *man's* work, he'd 'a' grow'd up somethin'
like a *man*. He hed grit—'er else was too big
a fool to know when to quit—'er he stuck to
work week in an' week out, all alone, fer no-
body wasn't fool enough to go partners with
him—not much! And then—he struck it rich,
you bet! a three-foot lead o' pay-dirt, so rich in
'beans' you could find a good dozen in 'most

every han'ful o' dirt! He did so—an' that's
why I say 'a fool fer luck'!"

"In jest two months the little cuss didn't
hev a cunce o' dust to his name! Every darned
'bean' was gone—most of it buckin' ag'in' faro.
An' little Leatherhead he turned out to be the
dead beatin'est bumster they was in camp."

"Twas that same fall he opened the boys'
peepers ag'in, which I was one on 'em. We—
my two pard's 'nd me—hed him up country a-
prospectin', an' was on our way back, not
hevin' struck color sence we sot out, an' was
mobbly three miles from camp, when we hearn
the dog-gonest screechin' an' caterwaulin' an'
yowlin' you ever seed—a nigger camp-meetin'
wasn't no more than a mug o' lager to a bar'l
o' bug-juice!"

"He smelt fun, an' struck out, hot-foot.
'Twas Leatherhead, es we mought a-knowed."

"Old Eph' hed troed him. 'Twould 'a' made
a dead Dutchman laugh, stranger! Thar the
little cuss was, up a saplin', hangin' on tooth
an' toenail, which the bar was just *more'n*
shakin' the bush, an' grinnin' like he felt
tickler'n 'n thunder. We hed jest time to see
this, when greeny's holds broke and down he
went, kersplunt, plowin' the fust o' the hill
wuss'n a two-legged gopher. 'Twas jest his luck
we came up jest as we did, ur he'd a-slept that
night under Old Eph's overcoat, *sure*. Es it
was, we hed our work cut out fer us, an' Old
Eph kep' us mighty busy fer a while, you hear
me!"

"They wasn't one uv us but could show
some o' his hand-write afore he pegged out.
An' when he *did* go under, an' we hed time
to look after Leatherhead, whar do you think
we found the little cuss? What you reckon he
was a-doin'? Stranger, you can jest everlast-
inly chaw my allybaster year of the little war-
mint wasn't right whar he fell, a-squatin' on his
hinders, an' a-akin' out the nuggets o' gold by
the quart, from the bigness of a hen's aig-
down! It's the scam'alous truth ur I wouldn't
say so! He'd tumbled fa'r an' squar in the
richest 'pocket' ever opened up in all Cali-
forny! I tell you, stranger, it jest takes a fool
fer double-distilled stud-hoss luck—you hear
me!"

"We went pard's in that find, an' tuck out
over a hundred weight o' the pure stuff inside
o' two days. We never vided it up, so to this
day I don't know how much my share was.
Leatherhead was afeard o' bein' robbed, an' so
he said to put it all on 'posit at the 'spress of-
fice. An' that same night the agent he levand-
ed—an' we was gittin' drunker'n b'iled owls;
sorter givin' the bags a good-by benefit, y-
know, afore settin' out fer home an' the old
folks, afore our fortins. We never seed hide
n'r ha'r o' that agent n'r our gold ag'in,
though me 'n' my two pard's we hunted fer
his skep'nigh six months a'er that."

"I never went back to them diggin's, but I
hearn the boys tell all about little Leatherhead,
man's the time. He staided down an' tuck
to 'driftin'—diggin' 'long a lead into the hill,
y-
know. He jest barly made his grub fer
nearly a year, the boys said, but he stuck to it
like a major. Them was rich diggin's, an' the
boys was makin' thar piles all 'round him, but
he never got a smell, sca'cely. Fer all that he
kep' on, sayin' he knowed his luck must turn
ag'in 'fore long; an' shore enough it *did*,
though not jest the way he 'spected, I don't
guess."

The boys was all at grub, one noon, when
a John kem in, in his pig-tail straight on end,
he was s' monstrous bad scart. He said he
was passin' by Leatherhead's drift when he
felt the ground shake like a young airtquake,
an' then he seed the hull tunnel cave in. That
was enough. Up the boys lepped, gruppin' the
handiest tools, an' run fer the cave-in. 'Twas
jest as the John said, an' one squint told them
that thar wasn't the leastest mite o' use in
thinkin' o' tryin' to dig the pore feller out.
He'd drifted full sixty yards into the moun-
tain, an' from the looks the hull outfit hed
caved in. 'Twould take two good days fer
them to onkiver him, n'r he wouldn't be with
them when they did git him out. So back
they goes to thar grub."

"I told you, stranger, it tuck a fool fer
luck, an' I stick to it yit. Little Leatherhead
wasn't dead yit—not much! Ef it'd bin any-
body else—but jest lissen."

"The hull ruff didn't cave in; some forty
foot was left a'er. The boy wasn't so bad
scart es a sensible critter would 'a' bin. He
hed grub enough to last him fer a couple o'
days, an' he knowed thar war air a-plenty fer
him to breathe fer awhile, anyhow. So he sets
to work. He couldn't dig back the way he
come, fer a most thunderin' big rock hed set-
tled down right in the way, an' so he digs to
one side, puttin' in his best licks, es you may
reckon, secin' he was workin' fer life. An'
afore he'd drifted twenty feet, stranger, he
struck a lead the richest you ever saw; by his
light it looked like plum solid gold! Jest then
he didn't make much a'count o' it; he'd 'a'
given it all fer one squint o' open air, I reckon.
But, jest see how his owidacious luck kep' pour-
in' onto the little fool imp! He cut through
that vein, an' twenty feet furdur, when ker-
splunt! out he comes into a old tunnel whar
hed quartered to ards his'n. 'Twas a old one,
which it hedn't bin worked fer a year or more,
not payin' grub-money to the owners."

"Now anybody but a blamed fool 'd 'a' run
out fer a big hurraw boys an' a genteel drunk
over his escape, but he didn't. I reckon he
thought all the boys would want to see jest
how hed gophered out, an' then somebody 'd
be sure to see the gold, an' he mought lose his
claims onto it. So what does he do but lay
low an' work that vein by night, mostly, liv-
in' on sech grub es he could pick up 'round the
camp, ur buy from some o' the Johns who was-
n't smart enough to guess anythin' was up.
He run it fer two weeks, when he got skeered
—thought somebody was watchin' his doin's
an' layin' fer him. So one night out he sneaks
an' makes fer the town, to tell his story. But
he hadn't gone a hundred yards afore some-
thin' hit him from ahind, an' all he knowed was
that he was bein' robbed. He could jest make
out 'at the feller jumped onto a hoss, an' start-
ed off with his gold, an' give a yell that was
hearn all over camp, an' brung the boys out to
see what was the matter."

"When Leatherhead come to, he found his
dust—in the buckskin sacks which same hed
his 'nitals marked onto 'em—layin' beside him.
The boys told him 'at the hoss the thief rid
hed stumbled an' throwed its rider, an' broke
his neck, jest es they turned out at the little
varmint's yell, an' so they got back his pile
agin. More stud-hoss luck, you see, stranger!
I never seed sech a feller! 'Twas jest that way
with him from A to A-undersand. Whenever
hed git down to the lowest notch, 'long would
come a streak of luck, an' set him up higher 'n
ever. I reckon 'twould 'a' bin money in'n
pocket ef 'd bin born a fool, too—I do so!"

"But Leatherhead—what became of him?"
I inquired.

"You'd never guess in a month o' Sundays,
stranger! But, I'll tell ye. The little cuss
tuck a notion hed go home, with what he'd
got, so he sold his gold for paper on Frisco,
an' started out